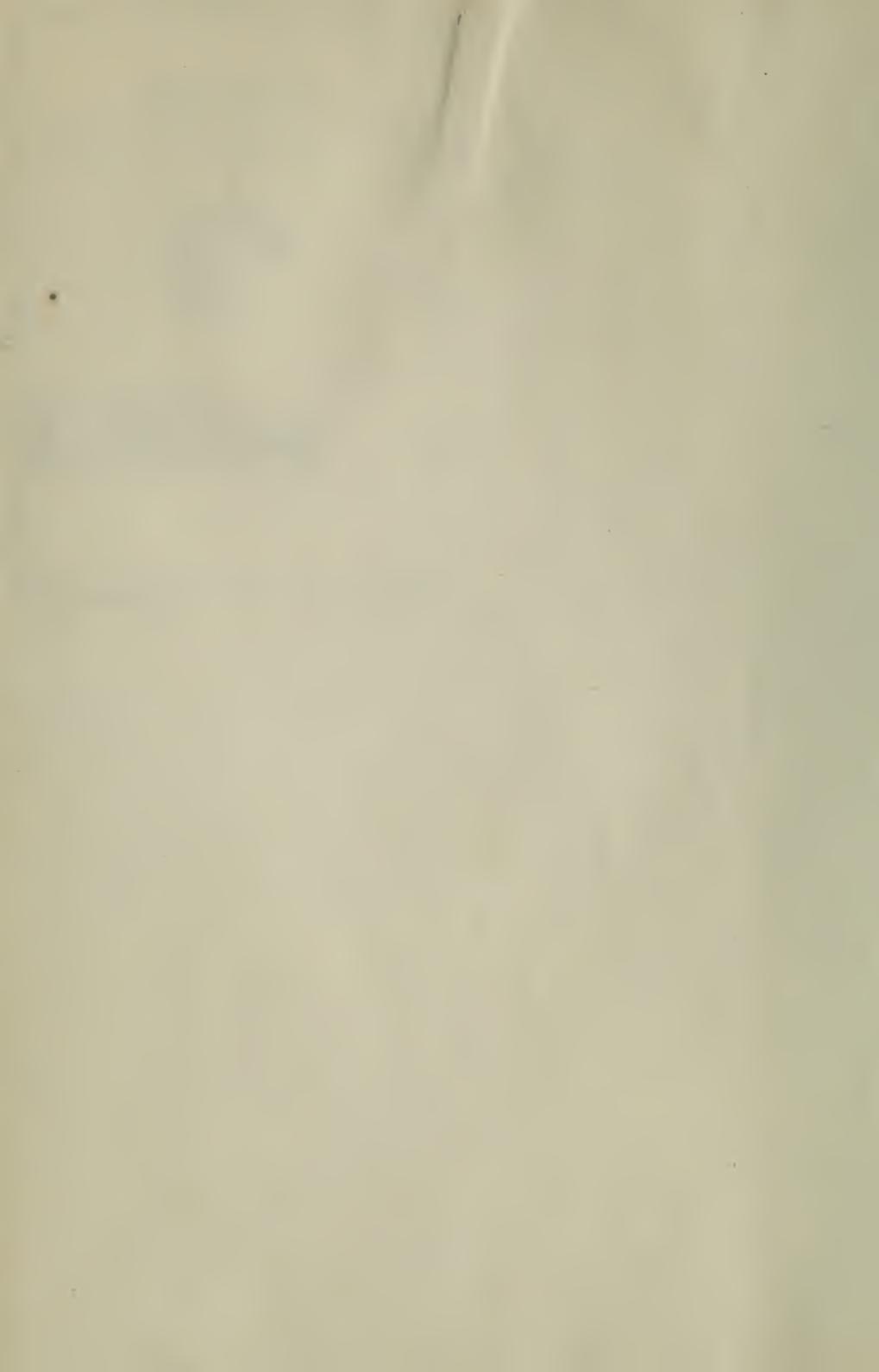


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STORIES OF POPULAR OPERAS

BY

H. A. GUERBER



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1920

THE HOLLOW LANDS
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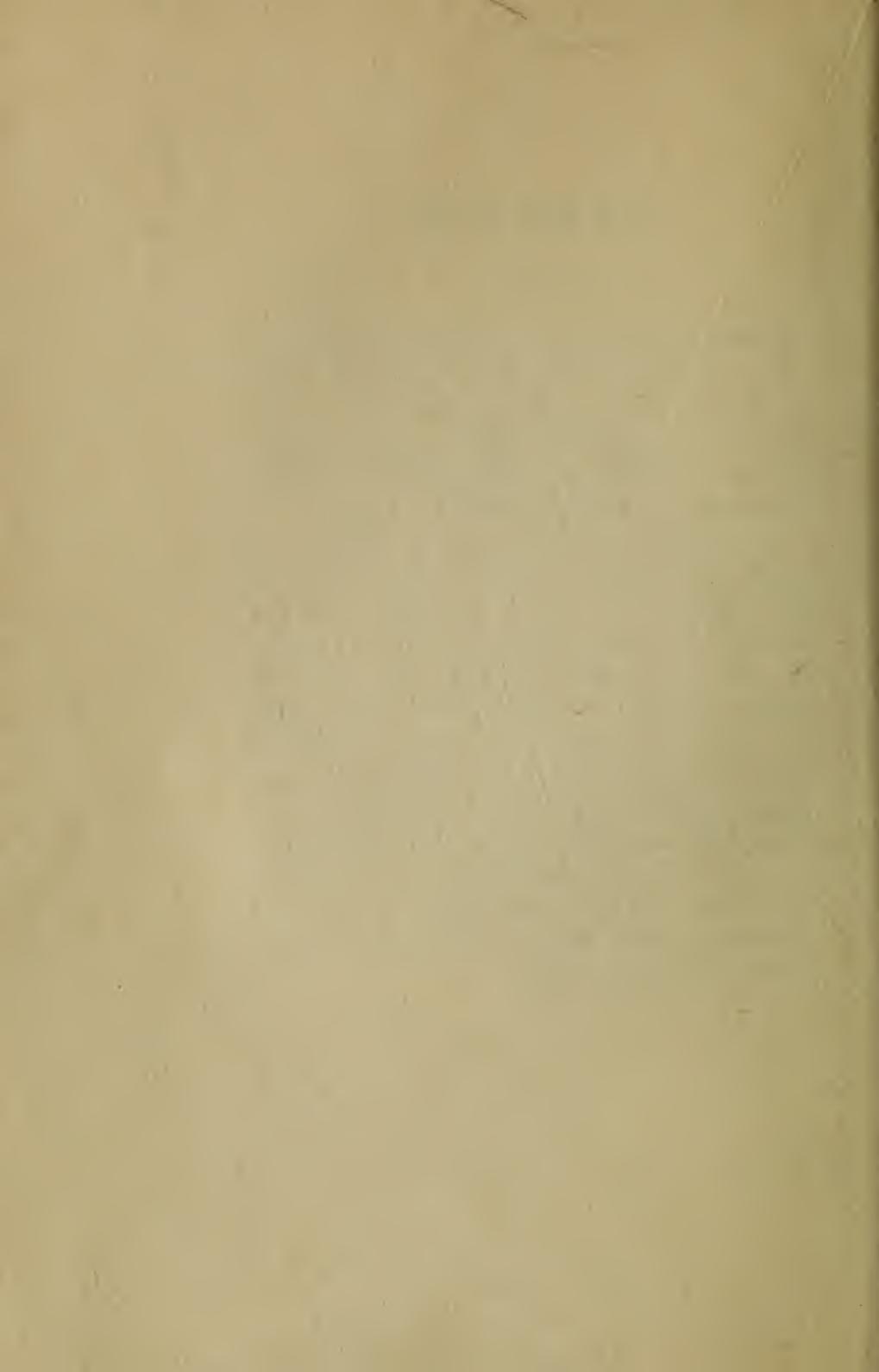
BY DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

Published, October

PREFACE

THE librettos of many of the popular operas included in this small volume, are either so involved, or so different from the sources whence they have been taken, that the uninitiated often find it difficult to gain an intelligent idea of what is taking place on the stage.

The object of these stories is therefore to enable the reader to follow every motion of the singers, and, even if unfamiliar with the language in which the opera is given, to have a fair idea of all that is said and done. For this reason the plots are told in detail, just as they are given, no attempt being made to embellish or modify them in any way. Many of the subjects are trivial, some absurd, and a few so unsavory that one often wishes that the beautiful music were connected with more worthy themes. However, such as these operas are, they are given here, in the hope of enhancing the pleasure of all who hear them.



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STORIES
OF
POPULAR OPERAS

WILLIAM TELL¹

THIS opera is based on the legend which inspired Schiller's masterpiece of the same name, and which, with sundry modifications, has been the theme of many poets and playwrights. The libretto is by Bis and Jouy and the score by Rossini. It was first given in Paris in 1829, and, owing to its romantic setting and exalted patriotic tone, is still very popular.

The rising curtain reveals the lake of Lucern, with all the attractions of blue waters, gray rocks, foaming waterfalls, and green hills, against a background of snow topped mountains. The hero, William Tell, is near his hut, tilling his garden, while his wife, Edwige, and son, Jemmy, are busy near him. Down by the lake, a fish-

¹ See "Legends of Switzerland," pp. 181-193.

erman lazily rocks in his boat, while shepherds on the hillside, and peasants in the meadows, people the scene. After a beautiful overture, a chorus lauds the serene skies, which attune all hearts to prayer and praise. The chorus ended, the fisherman, in an idyllic ballad, invites his beloved to join him, for she has predicted that this will be a sunny day.

William Tell, listening to this song, comments that the man's heart is care free, for he spends his time singing of love, a bliss which is denied all true patriots who have once realized their country's bondage to Austria. His troubled mention of Switzerland's oppression is silenced by the fisherman's merry song, which attracts the attention of Edwige and Jemmy. They, in their turn, exclaim that lulled by present prosperity, the fisherman gives no thought to adversity, which may yet add deeper, graver notes to his love-song.

When they have finished singing, the echoes are awakened by the characteristic "Ranz des Vaches," or "Kuhreihen," the herdsman's musical call to summon the cattle home from the luxuriant Alpine pastures. These merry sounds attract the attention of all present, who, in chorus, proclaim that such jubilant tones announce some festive occasion, in which they

will gladly share. A moment later, the venerable patriot Melchthal is seen coming down the hill, followed by his son Arnold, and by a procession of peasants in festive garb. The chorus loudly greets the appearance of this august man, and Edwige, perceiving that he heads a bridal procession, judges the moment auspicious for renewing her own vows of love and fidelity. Her mention of love,—so grateful to the two bridal couples,—is bitter to Arnold, who, in an aside, declares that the mere word freezes the blood in his veins. His agitation, however, is unheeded, for Edwige has drawn near Melchthal, and pointing to the waiting couples, is begging him to perform the marriage ceremony. As the patriarch demurs, Tell draws near, bidding him not to hesitate to exercise the office of pastor, to which his age and virtue fully entitle him.

Yielding to the entreaties of all present, Melchthal bids the chorus raise a song in praise of love and marriage, a request which is complied with ere the chorus marches off the scene. Then stepping forward, Tell places his house at the disposal of the feasters, saying it may prove a welcome shelter from the noonday heat. He adds, that the home which his ancestors left him, seems the dearest spot on

earth, a place where he can flee from his foes, and jealously conceal his parental joy and pride.

Seeing Tell rapturously embrace Jemmy, Melchthal turns to Arnold, gravely pointing out to him the happiness he misses by refusing to marry. Then, he and the Tell family follow the chorus, leaving Arnold alone upon the stage, to give vent to passionate regrets that he cannot love some village maid. But, unfortunately, his heart has been enthralled by Mathilda, sister of the Austrian tyrant Gessler, ever since he snatched her from the path of an avalanche. Still, the young man realizes how far this noble lady is above him, and how vain is the love which he cannot tear out of his heart.

While he is picturing the anguish he will feel when he learns she had been given to another, he hears the sound of trumpets, and becomes aware that Gessler's hunting party is passing by. To behold Mathilda,—even at a distance,—and to hear her voice is such sweet torture, that Arnold prepares to follow them. But, just as he is about to leave the stage, Tell reappears, inquiring the cause of his grief, and inviting his confidence. At first, the young man refuses to speak, and when Tell asks why he trembles, tries to put him off the track by

exclaiming that to see his country under a stranger's yoke is surely galling enough.

Although simple-minded, Tell knows that the young man is concealing something, and when Arnold darkly hints that other woes await this unhappy people, urges him to speak openly, remembering his duty to his country. The young man, whose information is due to Mathilda, hesitates to sacrifice his lady-love to his country, and while he indulges in a brief soliloquy, Tell studies his countenance, in which he detects signs of remorse for having hitherto failed in loyalty to his native land. He adds, that seeing the young man's regret for past wavering, he is willing, henceforth, to trust him fully, for that he feels their cause will triumph if they are only true to themselves and to duty.

When Arnold suddenly asks what power the Swiss have to oppose the enemy, Tell exclaims that they have dauntless hearts, and that if courage does not fail them they must succeed in overthrowing the tyrant. Arnold, less confident, inquires what Tell will do if defeated, but the patriot warmly retorts that he is fighting for liberty and honor, not for glory, and that should he fail, his refuge will be death and heaven his avenger. These noble answers, given in spirited tones, fire Arnold's enthusiasm,

so that he solemnly pledges himself to stand by his countrymen when the hour of danger draws near.

At this point of their dialogue, the hunting horns are again heard, and the chase once more draws near. Both men exclaim, and Tell, recognizing that Gessler is approaching, and that Arnold is again wavering in his allegiance, reproaches him so touchingly, that the young man vows he will prove his loyalty by defying the tyrant the first time he sees him. In his eagerness, Arnold is about to go in quest of Gessler, but Tell admonishes him to be cautious, and set his old father in some place of safety, ere he attempts so rash a proceeding.

At the mention of danger for his father, Arnold again hesitates, but the recollection of his country's needs steels his heart, until he suddenly remembers that by attacking Gessler, he will forfeit all hope of Mathilda. The struggle between love and patriotism is closely watched by Tell, who is glad to see love for his country triumph, just as the wedding procession returns. Tell now opines that it will be best not to sadden the shepherds' joy, but to leave them one day of unalloyed happiness, to which his young companion agrees, vowing that after that, the time for vengeance will come.

Meantime, the bridal procession has filled the stage, and Melchthal, addressing the two couples, says that their vows having been recorded in heaven, it now behooves him to give them his blessing. Tell declares that such a benediction must bring luck, and that all who revere old age will reap their reward, while Arnold, contrasting the happiness of the newly married couples with his own despair, gives vent to his grief in an aside.

The chorus next intones a solemn appeal to heaven in behalf of the bridal couples, after which Melchthal exhorts the bridegrooms to emulate their ancestors in sobriety, patriotism and virtue, as well as in rearing a new generation of defenders for the liberties of Helvetia.

At the conclusion of his speech, the hunt is heard for the third time, and Tell, with a hurried exclamation that Gessler is coming, acquiesces in Arnold's proposal that they depart. While Edwige momentarily detains her husband to ascertain the cause of his agitation, Arnold vanishes, and Tell, finding him gone, assures his wife he must hurry after him, to find out the secret cause of his dejection. He also implores Edwige to keep up the merriment among the peasants, and when, disquieted by his words, she makes further questions, oracularly

answers that the din of revelry will best conceal the roar of the coming tempest.

The peasants have just finished singing their bridal chorus, when Jemmy announces that a shepherd is coming, trembling so painfully that he can scarcely sustain himself. His exclamation attracts the attention of Edwige and of the fishermen, who now cry that it is the worthy Leuthold, and wonder what can have happened to him.

Supporting himself on a hatchet still reeking with blood, Leuthold gasps out a prayer for help, and in answer to Edwige's breathless query, explains that he is fleeing from the vengeance of cruel men bent upon slaying him. When Edwige, horror-struck, asks what crime he can have committed, the man sternly replies that he has merely fulfilled a sacred duty in killing one of the minions of the governor, who insulted his only daughter.

While all silently agree that the man is justified, Melchthal wonders how he can be saved. Leuthold declares if they will only set him across the lake, he can find a safe asylum, but the weather-wise fisherman, seeing the signs of one of those sudden storms which make the Swiss lakes so treacherous, vows it would mean certain death to venture away

from shore. In despair at seeing this last chance of safety vanish, Leuthold is solemnly cursing the fisherman, when Tell suddenly returns, saying he cannot find Arnold anywhere.

He is greeted by the peasants' voices raised in wailing and threats, and by Leuthold's fervent appeal for heavenly aid. When Tell demands what all this means, Leuthold, pointing across the tossing waves, vows that safety lies yonder, but that the fisherman, as cruel as Gessler, refuses to help him across. After ascertaining that the charge is true, Tell denounces the fisherman as a coward, and offers his services, just as soldier voices without are heard clamoring for the blood of the fugitive. Urging Leuthold to lose no time, Tell prepares to follow him into the boat, calling to Edwige,—who would fain hold him back,—that heaven will watch over them both.

The boat has pushed off, and the peasants are fervently praying for the fugitives, when Rodolph and his men rush on the scene, vociferating that the hour of death and vengeance has come for the murderer of one of their number.

With all a child's glee, Jemmy points to the vessel,—now far out of reach,—declaring the man safe, a statement which fills Rodolph's heart with rage. While Melchthal, Edwige,

Jemmy, and the peasants, express their joy and relief in asides, Rodolph mutters that their evident satisfaction at his discomfiture is nothing short of an insult. The thunder rolls, and the people are just preparing to seek refuge from the storm, when Rodolph sternly bids them remain and disclose who has befriended the assassin and ventured to convey him out of Gessler's reach!

Meantime, his soldiers surround the peasants to prevent their escape, drawing their swords, and threatening them with death if they do not immediately reply. In their terror, Edwige, Jemmy and the peasants wail and pray, while Melchthal staunchly asserts that what one has done all would do, bidding the people be brave and keep silence. Once more Rodolph utters dire threats, and when Melchthal indignantly reminds him that this is the land of liberty, suddenly orders his soldiers to seize the old man and lead him bound to Gessler. Then, he commands that fire be set to the cottages, and cattle and goods be killed and destroyed. This bloodthirsty order is received with cruel joy by the soldiers, while all the rest denounce it as an unjustifiable proceeding, which God will avenge by sending some dauntless archer, whose arrow will yet pierce the tyrant's breast. The first

act closes with the rush of the soldiery amid the stampeding cattle, depicted in a masterly galopade, and by the loud roar of the flames.

The second act is played in a glade on the banks of the same lake, at twilight. The scene is the famous Rütli—the Runnymede of Switzerland. As the curtain rises, returning huntsmen intone a merry chorus, describing their pursuit of the fleet chamois amid rocks and torrents. They are answered by a chorus of shepherds, who say the slanting rays of the setting sun, and the village bell, admonish them to seek repose.

The huntsmen find the shepherds' song monotonous, and openly rejoice that their summons come from Gessler's loud hunting horns, and not from tinkling bells.. When all have gone, and the scene is quite deserted, Mathilda appears, exclaiming that she had wandered thither, trusting that Arnold will follow her soon, for she must see once more the man whom she has loved ever since he saved her from a horrible death. She is determined no longer to make a secret of her affection, and in a touching romance hails the dense woods around her, where she can pour out her heart, knowing that Echo alone can hear and repeat what she reveals.

She has just finished this beautiful song, when Arnold approaches, craving her pardon if he intrudes. Mathilda having replied that she was expecting him, Arnold bids her speak, vowing he will obey her commands, even should they entail banishment or suicide. Mathilda informs him that far from wishing his exile or death, she loves him, an assurance which fills Arnold's heart with a joy which is soon clouded by the remembrance of the difference of their stations. But, as Mathilda urges him not to despair, he gains new courage, and when she bids him win laurels abroad, and then come home and claim her, he enthusiastically resolves to do so or die. In their delight at a prospective union, the lovers unite in a blissful duet, at the close of which, hearing footsteps, they part, making an appointment for the morrow, when they are to take final leave of each other for a time. Reluctant to lose sight of his beloved, however, Arnold detains her, until, on Tell and Walther's appearance, he bids her leave him.

A conversation ensues between the newcomers and Arnold, the former announcing that they have witnessed the lovers' meeting, and fear they are unwelcome. They add, however, that Arnold is evidently deserting their cause,

and going over to the enemy, his own behavior when he parted from Tell on the previous evening having first roused suspicions, which have been confirmed by this interview. When Arnold pleads his love, Tell sternly asks whether he had forgotten his country. Then, learning he is about to leave Switzerland to seek honor and glory elsewhere, gravely informs him that an aged man had just been murdered by Gessler, and that his blood is calling for vengeance from all the Swiss, and most of all from him.

At first, Arnold cannot conceive what claims this old man can have upon him, but as his companions gradually reveal further details, he suddenly becomes aware that they are speaking of his father, Melchthal. Learning that Gessler was torturing and slaying his old father, at the very moment when he was preparing to forsake his country and serve the enemy, Arnold is overcome by such violent remorse, that Tell and Walther pity him, declaring such a revelation as theirs must be an awful shock to a man so recently enthralled by love.

Slowly rousing from the apathy of despair, Arnold demands confirmation of what he has heard, then vows that the miscreant who slew his father shall soon fall by his hand. Seeing

him in this mood, Tell urges him to be calm and patient, promising him a glowing revenge if he will only wait. Then, he reveals to him that Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden,—three of the Forest Cantons—are to send delegates to the Rütli that very night, to arrange a revolt which is to restore freedom to an oppressed land, and deliver the tyrant Gessler into his hands.

All three actors next unite in a beautiful trio, wherein they encourage one another to hope and be strong, trusting to heaven's aid to free their country, and avenge the virtuous patriot, who will henceforth rank among their martyred saints.

As they conclude, Walther hears sounds in the forest; they listen, become aware of the tramp of many feet, and challenging the first men to appear in the clearing, receive the password : "Friends of Helvetia" from the detachment of Unterwaldners. Greetings are exchanged, and then the glade resounds with a stirring patriotic chorus from the men of Unterwald, ready to march to victory or death.

When Tell and Walther have thanked them for coming, trumpets are heard heralding the men from Schwyz, who enter singing, and are again welcomed and applauded by those already assembled. Only the men of Uri are now missing, but Tell explains that in order to keep their

plans secret, they are coming thither by paths known to them alone, across the treacherous lake. Even as he concludes this explanation, the deputation from Uri is seen marching up from the shore. When they too have given the password, and been welcomed, they join the circle, and all unanimously choose Tell for their leader, promising to help him punish the tyrant and recover their freedom.

William Tell now adjures all present to show themselves worthy of the blood from whence they sprang, and fixes the morrow for the uprising of the three Cantons, asking the men whether they are ready to conquer or die. Their assent being given with great enthusiasm, William Tell makes them repeat after him a solemn oath, wherein they pledge themselves by their honor, their wrongs, their ancestors, their progeny, and the heavens above them, to destroy the vile oppressor, calling down the most awful curses upon any member of their band who fails to do his part.

Arnold now points to the east, where the red dawn is hailed by Walther as a sign of war, and by Tell as an emblem of victory. The watchword for the coming day is given, and all file out, chanting in chorus the solemn "**To Arms.**"

The third act shows a remote spot in the mountains, where Mathilda and Arnold meet on the following morning,—as they had arranged, —to bid each other farewell. But, instead of an ardent, hopeful lover, Mathilda beholds a pallid, stern-faced man. Thinking his emotion due to a lover's anxiety, she assures him of her affection, and even volunteers an embrace. This offer,—which at any other moment would have filled Arnold's heart with rapture,—is now coldly declined, for it behooves him to remain here to avenge his dead father. Mathilda,—who knows nought of what has occurred,—asks what this means, so he tells her that he must renounce her forever, and that all his energies must henceforth be devoted to vengeance. When she insists upon knowing more, he adds that his father has been slain by the orders of a cruel man,—a man whose name she can guess, as her pallor and tremor plainly show.

This revelation overcomes Mathilda, for she perceives that peace and love have fled forever, and that the crime which her brother has committed, erects an insurmountable barrier between them. She realizes that filial duty exacts revenge, and that Arnold must renounce every other hope, but mourns her lot, parted from the man she loves, although she vows never to for-

get him, and to waken the echoes with the beloved name, inscribed in her heart ever since the day when he saved her life.

Her lament is interrupted by loud cries, which startle Arnold, but which Mathilda declares herald her brother's approach. When Arnold grimly suggests that they probably indicate a new crime, Mathilda assures him that, on the contrary they merely denote some military pageant, and implores him to disappear, lest harm should befall him. In heartrending accents she expresses her solicitude, saying wherever his footsteps may lead him, her love will follow, and it is only in compliance with her wishes that Arnold finally goes, for his thirst for vengeance prompts him to seek the tyrant's presence rather than flee.

The next scene represents the market-place at Altorf, with Gessler's castle in the background. At one end of the stage is a throne and dais, and in the centre of the square stands a tall pole, crowned with the tyrant's hat. A throng of people have assembled, and the opening chorus lauds Gessler, before whom every knee must bow. This chorus of soldiers and courtiers is answered by one of the stalwart Swiss patriots, declaring that wiser laws will prevail some day, when the supreme power,—

being exercised with justice and love,—will really be worthy of respect. Gessler, hearing this, is infuriated, but he consoles himself by pointing to the cap, before which all must bow; then, seating himself upon the throne erected for him, he announces that the ceremonies may begin, and that after all have done due homage to the emblem of his despotic power, song, and dance and merry sport will close the day.

While a Tyrolean chorus sings of agile feet treading gay measures, people pass before the pole, reluctantly doing obeisance. Just as the chorus ends, Rodolph and his soldiers seize Tell and his son, who go by without heeding the governor's emblem. When Rodolph roughly orders Tell to bend the knee, the patriot hotly retorts that while others may be intimidated, no power on earth can make him do reverence to what he despises! At these words, Rodolph notifies his master that a man refuses obedience, and Gessler immediately demands who the audacious wretch may be. Learning that it is Tell,—the man who snatched Leuthold from his vengeance,—he orders his arrest. So the soldiers disarm Tell, scornfully proclaiming that the boldest of archers is weaponless, and the most skillful steersman a prisoner!

While Gessler gloats over the revenge he is

about to take, Tell, in an aside, hopes that he will be the last of the tyrant's victims. Then, fearing for the safety of his child, he embraces him, bidding him run home to his mother, and direct her to place a lighted torch on the summit of yonder mountain, thus giving the expected signal for the uprising of the Cantons.

Jemmy starts to obey this order, but Gessler stays him, murmuring in an aside that this exchange of caresses only serves as fuel to his rage. Then, aloud, he demands whether this is Tell's son, and learning that it is his only child, curtly inquires whether the father wishes to save him. Tell blankly repeats his words, then tremblingly asks of what crime a mere child can be guilty; but when Gessler intimates that parents' crimes are visited on the children, he indignantly retorts that as he alone sinned in refusing homage, the punishment surely concerns him only.

These words increase the wrath of Gessler, who announces that unless Tell succeeds in hitting an apple, placed on the head of his son, the child must perish with him. In vain Tell exclaims that it is impossible to aim at one's only child, Gessler insists, even ordering the soldiers to seize and slay the boy on the spot. Running to his father, Jemmy implores him to accept the

tyrant's challenge, for he has all a child's implicit faith in his father's skill. In fact he bids Tell feel the pulsations of his heart, beating so steadily in its love and trust, a touching confidence, which almost breaks the father's heart, yet nerves him to try the uttermost to save his child. Calling for his bow,—which is restored to him,—Tell carefully selects two arrows from the quiver, sticking one into his bosom.

When Gessler bids his men bind and blind-fold the boy, Jemmy hotly rebels, declaring he will stand there unshackled, and will not even wince when he sees his father's arrow coming. His courage and innocence call forth the admiration of the chorus, and father and son exchange a last farewell, wherein Tell pours out his love and sorrow, bidding his child say his prayers and think of his mother. At a sign from Gessler, Jemmy is placed under a tree, with the apple on his head, and the father stationed at the appointed distance. After a wild look at Gessler, Tell feels for his second arrow, then spans his crossbow, takes careful aim, and shoots the apple from his son's head!

The applause of the spectators, the joyful shout of the boy, and the muttering of the disappointed tyrant are alike unheeded by Tell, who, clasping his son to his heart, sinks fainting

to the ground. But, even as he falls, the second arrow drops out of his bosom, and attracts the attention of the tyrant, who feared his prey was escaping him. When Tell opens his eyes once more and is able to speak, Gessler sternly inquires what he meant to do with his second dart. Unable to prevaricate, Tell retorts that it would have found a goal in his breast, had the child been harmed ; a reply, which so infuriates the governor, that, after a dire threat, he bids the guards bind the prisoner fast.

Just then Mathilda comes upon the scene, unable to credit the report which has reached her, or the words she had just heard. While the soldiers declare both father and son must die, the Swiss question whether to rebel and deliver them, and Gessler repeats that he is going to make an example of all who defy his authority. In vain Mathilda pleads with her brother, then finally throws her arms about the boy, whom she claims in the name of their sovereign, pointing at the same time to the people, whose threatening glances corroborate her statement that Gessler had better yield to her entreaties.

In an undertone, Rodolph, also, advises his master to give up the child, reminding him that he still holds one victim, upon whom he can

wreak his fury. Thus encouraged, Gessler,—heedless of the people, who after a brief moment of rejoicing over Jemmy's safety are pitying Tell,—gives loud orders to lead the prisoner down to his ship, for he intends to conduct him to Küsnacht, where he will be thrust in a foul den, so that venomous snakes can make an end of him.

In spite of the people's murmurs, and Rodolph's remonstrance that a storm is brewing, and it is not safe to venture out on the lake, Gessler hurries off Tell, who has barely time to embrace his son, and to join Mathilda, Jemmy, Gessler, Rodolph and the Swiss, in a song wherein grief, pity, anger, rage and regret are ably blended. Then Gessler departs and is followed by the loud imprecations of the Swiss.

The fourth act reveals the Melchthals' deserted hut, which Arnold revisits, singing of his burning longing to avenge his murdered father and the captive Tell. The sight of this familiar abode awakens gentler feelings in his breast, so he sings of the happy past, contrasting it sadly with the present. Just then, he hears a throng of people clamoring for vengeance, and wonders what the noise may mean, until the Swiss, pouring upon the scene, in-

form him in chorus of William's seizure, calling upon him to lead them to the rescue. Arnold comforts them with the assurance that the tyrant shall die, and when the chorus promise to second him, encourages the Swiss to dare all to shake off the galling yoke of servitude.

The next scene is played on the banks of the lake of Lucern, where rocks and trees barely allow you to perceive the fast darkening sky. Edwige, hastening to Küsnaht to die with her husband and son—news of whose danger has just reached her,—is stopped by peasants, who inquire where she is going. It is while she is hurriedly answering their questions, that Mathilda and Jemmy draw near. At the sound of her child's voice, Edwige is almost overcome with joy, and when the newcomers step forward, she rushes to meet them. A moment later, she looks eagerly around for Tell, and not seeing him, inquires where he may be? With all a child's innocence, Jemmy replies that he is still a prisoner, but that Mathilda,—who saved him from dire peril,—will surely rescue his father also. In her gratitude, Edwige blesses the noble lady, who encourages her to hope for the better times she has come hither to share with them, a hope which mother and son receive with innocent faith.

While they are expressing trust in the future, loud cries of "Victory" and "Liberty" are heard, and Tell comes upon the scene. After greeting his wife, he graphically describes how he escaped and pierced the heart of the traitor, who now lies fathoms deep in the lake, an act of justice which wins great applause from all present, who hail Tell as their liberator.

Arnold, who has come with Tell, now perceives Mathilda, and when he inquires why she is there, she replies that she has cast her lot with the Swiss people forever, news which would fill his cup with joy, did not the memory of his murdered father still haunt him.

The opera closes with a grand chorus, wherein rocks, mountains, and valleys are enjoined to echo the glad cry of victory and liberty, while the women crown William Tell, the national hero.

L'AFRICAINE

THE libretto of *L'Africaine* was written by Scribe, the score by Meyerbeer, and the work was first produced in 1865, at the Académie in Paris.

The rising curtain reveals the council chamber of the king of Portugal, where everything is in readiness for one of the important sessions the councillors are wont to hold within its walls. At first, the stage is deserted, but Inez, daughter of one of the statesmen, soon appears, asking her confidante Anna, whether she knows why her father summoned her so peremptorily? Anna supposes it is some matter of moment, a supposition which only adds to Inez's uneasiness, for she is always hoping for tidings of Vasco di Gama,—a lover who left her two years before to tread in Columbus' footsteps and discover some new world.

When Anna gently chides her for still hoping for his return, Inez confidently expresses a belief that he will succeed, recalling the song he sang beneath her window, as farewell serenade. This touching air she now repeats for Anna's

benefit, and also because the memory is so sweet that she loves to dwell upon it.

She has just finished singing, when her father, Don Diego, comes into the room. Like a dutiful daughter she humbly inquires his wishes, and learns that he thinks it best to inform her in private that the king has bestowed her hand in marriage upon Don Pedro, one of his grandees. When Inez utters an exclamation of dismay,—purporting that this can never be,—her father harshly silences her, telling her he fully approves of the royal choice. Then, as if afraid of being overheard, he softly bids his daughter,—if she would not incur his wrath,—forget her love for an unknown youth, and thankfully accept the fine match offered her.

Resenting the contemptuous terms in which he alludes to her lover, Inez impetuously retorts that Vasco's dauntless courage will yet enable him to win greatness; but, before she can finish what she wishes to say, her father curtly informs her that the very courage she vaunts, has already lured her lover to his ruin. Then, turning to Don Pedro, who has entered during this altercation, he blandly inquires whether it was not publicly rumored that Bernard Diaz was dead?

Gravely—as becomes a president of the royal

council,—Don Pedro confirms these tidings, adding that not only have Diaz's plans miscarried and his ships foundered, but that he and all his crew have perished on the inhospitable rocks. Twice Inez interrupts him with breathless questions ; and when she asks whether Vasco di Gama perished too, he quietly hands her a list, so that she may see his name written among the dead. In despair, Inez exclaims that her lover is no more, and then allows Anna to lead her out of the room, so that she may hide her grief from every eye.

Her exit is viewed with sore displeasure by Don Pedro, who wonders why the news should cause emotions, which, he acknowledges, rouse suspicions in his breast. On hearing this, Don Diego hastens to assure him that the matter is of little consequence, adding that the memory of a *dead* lover can surely not trouble him greatly.

Before the President can reply, the members of the council are ushered in, and file to their appointed places in the hall. Official proceedings now begin with an invocatory chorus, wherein heavenly guidance is besought by all present. Then, rising, Don Pedro makes known that ever since Columbus' discoveries enriched Spain, their sovereign has been de-

sious of signaling his reign and country by some equally great discovery.

The Grand Inquisitor,—who does not approve of visionary projects,—growls that instead of winning glory, the king is more likely to ruin his country, an interpolation which Don Pedro does not heed, for he goes on to state that Portuguese navigators have long suspected that the coveted road to India lies around the southern coast of Africa, although the Cape of Storms (Good Hope) has hitherto baffled all their attempts to round its dangerous shores.

The Grand Inquisitor again berates the folly of the enterprise, saying its dangers have been proved, for the vessels of Diaz were recently dashed to pieces on that very cliff! After all have expressed surprise and dismay at these tidings, the president goes on to announce that as this rumor has not been confirmed, the king has bidden them assemble, to decide whether a new expedition should be fitted out to rescue, or, at least, to ascertain the fate of their brave fellow countrymen.

Once more the Grand Inquisitor calls upon them to pray, before they venture to emit any opinion on so weighty a subject, and the chorus again invokes light from above. Then, turning to Don Alvar, the next in rank, Don Pedro

gravely asks his opinion. In a few brief words this councillor recommends that prayers be said for Diaz, whose days Providence has cut short.

His manner is so assured, that Don Pedro asks what proof he can produce of the mariner's death, whereupon Alvar immediately replies that a seaman—the sole survivor of the ill-starred expedition,—is waiting without, ready to give any further information desired. At these words, Don Pedro bids the ushers summon the man, and then asks Don Alyar by what name the stranger is to be addressed. When he hears "Vasco di Gama," he gives an involuntary start, as does Don Diego, for both have recognized the name of Inez's lover.

Before they can express their emotion otherwise than by a suppressed exclamation, Vasco di Gama is ushered into the council hall, where,—having done due obeisance to the assembled courtiers,—he complies with Don Pedro's mute invitation to address the assembly. In a graphic speech he describes the loss of his companions, and his own arrival in a land, where none of European birth had ever set foot. When Don Alvar opines that he must bitterly have cursed the fate which left him thus stranded, the young man enthusiastically exclaims that on the contrary, he blessed it, for he foresaw the time,

when, if the king would only empower him, he could return thither to claim a boundless realm, mastery of the seas, and a world-wide commerce, all of which now await Portugal just beyond the Cape of Storms !

When the Grand Inquisitor ironically inquires what he will exact in exchange for all the wealth with which he purposed to endow the crown, the youth enthusiastically replies that his share will be immortality, for he had determined to succeed even at the risk of his life ! His passionate appeal for a ship and crew is received by the Grand Inquisitor and all the older members with all the contemptuous pity granted to a madman, although the younger councillors opine that they ought to grant his request, for they feel sure he must win.

Once more Vasco di Gama addresses them, imploring them to see and question two slaves whom he has brought from Africa, who can confirm what he has already advanced. When the Grand Inquisitor questions the advisability of conceding even this request, Vasco assures him that the mere sight of creatures of so different a race will plead in favor of his plan, words which determine the President, who now signals to the ushers to admit the two slaves.

At Don Pedro's haughty : "Slaves draw

near!" Selika, a tawny-skinned woman, and Nelusko a dusky-hued man,—both in rich oriental garb,—appear before the council. But when the President demands the name of their country, they silently refuse to disclose it. Don Pedro next inquires who brought them thither, only to be confronted by the same stony silence. Still, when Don Diego audibly wonders whether they are mute, the man Nelusko briefly answers "no," thus demonstrating that he is not dumb. Having failed with the man, Don Pedro next turns to the woman, who merely states that their boat,—caught in a fearful storm,—was carried to a foreign shore, where they were made prisoners and detained far from their native isle.

Pointing to Selika's regular features, dark skin, and fantastic garb, Vasco now calls the council's attention to the fact that she is unlike any creature they have ever seen, a circumstance which all the councillors confirm by signs. Once more the president asks the name of her country, and Vasco, seeing she does not answer, softly implores her to speak. In an aside Selika declares that she cannot resist *his* voice, although, in undertones Nelusko adjures her,—by the gods of native land,—to conceal her name and station, and to remember that, bound

in chains like a common slave, she is nevertheless a queen. His words are either not heard or not understood by Don Pedro, who impatiently repeats his question.

Selika first evades giving a direct answer by sadly stating that slaves have no country, while Nelusko turns indignantly upon the Portuguese, telling them that as long as an ox can bear burdens, no one investigates its pedigree! He bitterly adds that masters should be equally indifferent concerning the origin of their slaves.

When Don Pedro utters an indignant exclamation, Vasco ventures to intervene, saying it is vain to attempt to wring any further information from slaves, whose very reticence shows that they are trying to keep their country's locality from European knowledge, for fear lest it be coveted and seized. He then renews his request for a ship, promising to discover the land, and make it subject to Portugal. Then, Don Pedro coldly bids him await the decision of the council, which, after a new invocation for divine aid, again proceeds to business. A subdued colloquy is soon followed by Don Pedro's curt announcement that Vasco's request is rejected, and that he is hereby enjoined to abandon his senseless projects forever.

Such an epithet rouses the young navigator's

wrath, and he hotly retorts that Columbus' proud visions were once treated as the delusions of a madman, too! When the president and council endeavor to silence him, he vows he will be heard, and that the day will come when they will be proved blind and prejudiced statesmen. These harsh terms rouse the anger of the president, Don Diego, and of part of the chorus; but, while they clamor loudly that Vasco's life should pay the forfeit for such insolence, the rest of the council advise milder measures. This dispute is settled by the Grand Inquisitor, who sentences the explorer to life-long imprisonment, a punishment which Vasco avers they inflict to prevent his proving them mistaken, although truth cannot be hid.

The chorus, more and more incensed by accusations which are too just not to rankle, denounces the young man, until he and Don Alvar—who sympathizes in his views,—proudly appeal to posterity for their justification. Their protest, however, only hastens the climax, a solemn curse uttered by the Grand Inquisitor, and loudly echoed by the self-righteous chorus.

The second act opens in a prison at Lisbon, where Vasco has been confined with his two slaves. The navigator is fast asleep on a bench, Selika crouching beside him, and softly

singing a beautiful lullaby. Seeing he is oblivious of everything, she tenderly gazes upon his face, confessing that she loves him so dearly, that she regrets neither home, nor state, nor subjects. She is about to kiss the sleeper, when she perceives Nelusko coming, and hides behind one of the great pillars, to see what her dusky companion will do. Lost in thought, Nelusko advances,—talking to himself,—and saying that his queen's honor, and his bitter hatred, alike demand the murder of the prisoner. Only then, he becomes aware of his sleeping foe, and, although loath to take advantage of a defenseless creature, raises his hand to slay him.

Before he can strike, Selika stays his hand, impetuously asking why he wishes to kill a fellow-prisoner? When Nelusko retorts that he hates all Christians, Selika reminds him that this one saved their lives, a fact which he cannot deny, although he rebels against it, for it hurts his pride to have been sold in a common slave-market. Still hoping to win him over, Selika next recalls the kindness of this stranger, who sold his jewels so as to purchase her also at his request. Had it not been for this, the barbaric queen declares she would have been even more desolate than at present, for no one would

have been near to help, advise, and defend her. She concludes by again inquiring how Nelusko can dream of murdering such a benefactor, and he grimly reiterates his abhorrence for all Christians.

Unable to accept this as Nelusko's sole motive, Selika questions him, until she wrings from him a passionate confession of boundless loyalty to her,—his queen,—and of bitter hatred for the man, whom, in spite of all her reserve, he feels sure she loves. He then registers a solemn oath to take Vasco's life, a threat which draws an agonized cry from Selika, but which he renews in spite of all her entreaties. He has, in fact, worked himself up to such a pitch of rage and jealousy, that he feels he can compass the dark deed, but when he again attempts to approach the sleeper, Selika rescues her master by rousing him.

Waking with a start, Vasco inquires what she wishes, and Selika, seeing her companion conceal his dagger, and knowing the danger temporarily averted, replies that his slave has brought his morning meal. With a brief word of dismissal to Nelusko,—who departs regretfully when it has been repeated,—Vasco rises, and, going towards the map which adorns his prison, contemplates it dreamily, soliloquizing

the while over the fatal promontory which no mariner has yet rounded. He adds that this glory shall be his, pointing eagerly to the place where he fancies a safe passage lies. Meantime, Selika, has drawn near ; she follows the pointing finger, and frantically implores him not to venture *there!* When he inquires, in surprise, why he should not do so, she gravely informs him that it would mean certain death. Amazed, Vasco questions her, and little by little is told the right place, and learns that beyond that rugged promontory, lies an island (presumably Madagascar), dear to the gods, whence she and her companion were torn by a typhoon, to be cast upon hostile shores.

These revelations,—confirming as they do his long cherished ideas,—fill Vasco's heart with such joy, that he ends by rapturously embracing Selika, promising her his undying gratitude, while she, in great agitation, fancies that she has at last won a place in his heart. It is just as their duet closes, and while they still stand in this affectionate attitude, that the prison door opens, and Don Pedro and Inez are ushered in by Nelusko. Pointing to the couple, Don Pedro coldly calls Inez's attention to this confirmation of the tale they heard. She is vainly trying to restrain her emotion, when Vasco,

perceiving her, rushes towards her, calling her his beloved. Thus abruptly forsaken, Selika, utters a wail of despair, and then, stealing nearer, contemplates her fair rival with evident envy.

Her actions are not heeded by the principal actors, for Inez now proceeds to inform the navigator that she has secured his release from the prison where he has been languishing. As he seems unable to grasp the fact that he is free, she shows him the document which liberates him, and then sadly adds that he must never venture within her presence again. Before she and Don Pedro can leave this gloomy place,—as she suggests,—Vasco exclaims that he has guessed the cause of her coldness, and assures her that her suspicions are baseless. He adds that Selika is nothing but a slave, purchased in Africa, and perceiving signs of incredulity, impetuously offers to prove the truth of his words by giving her to Inez. Heedless of Selika's protest, he then hands her over, and when Nelusko inquires what is to become of him, transfers him also to his beloved's custody, vowing he would give his heart's best blood to secure one loving glance from her eyes.

This declaration seems equally painful to Inez and Selika, but Don Pedro eagerly accepts the

proposed transfer of slaves, haughtily promising to pay for them ere he sails. This mention of a journey catches Vasco's attention, and in answer to his question, Don Pedro briefly explains that the king has given him orders to find the dread passage around the Cape of Storms.

Vasco di Gama cannot conceive how a man, to whom he has confided his plans, can thus take advantage of his temporary imprisonment, to rob him of the fruit of his studies and toil, but, when he expresses a small part of his amazement, Don Pedro uneasily retorts that he has burned those plans, and that the glory of the coming enterprise is solely his, a claim which Vasco disputes.

Meantime, seeing here a means of satisfying his grudge against Vasco, Nelusko whispers to Don Pedro that he will serve as his pilot, being familiar with the long sought passage around Africa. In an aside, Don Pedro accepts this proposal, before informing Vasco that the king has already named him governor of any lands he may discover. When Vasco asks when he intends to leave, Don Pedro replies this very day, and summons Inez to follow him. His authoritative tone is too marked not to call forth comment from Vasco, so Don Pedro coldly informs him that they were married this very morning.

Vasco receives this news with an incredulous cry, which induces Inez to approach him, and confide in an aside, that, having been told he was faithless, she consented to marry Don Pedro, on condition that they would set him free. She concludes her statement,—which is only once interrupted by a despairing exclamation from Vasco,—by the announcement that she is about to go far away to die.

A quintette ensues, wherein Vasco expresses his sorrow to see Inez the wife of another, while Don Pedro and Nelusko gloat over every sign of pain he betrays, and the two women pity him, one of them declaring she must conceal her feelings because she is married, while the other secretly rejoices that a dangerous rival is removed.

This song ended, Inez,—whose actions are closely watched and softly commented upon by the two slaves,—tells her former lover that she has freed him to enable him to follow the path of glory, adding that he will find her in her grave on his return, but that they shall meet again in heaven, never to part.

Her grief touches Vasco, who comments upon her wrecked happiness, while Selika mourns because she is to be parted from the man she loves. Their mournful farewells are

offset by triumphant ones on the part of Nelusko,—who rejoices to see a Christian suffer,—and of Don Pedro,—who meanly enjoys his rival's despair.

When the president finally leads his wife out of this gloomy prison, Vasco sinks down upon the seat as if fainting, and Selika, seeing him thus, wishes to fly to his aid, but is forcibly removed by Nelusko.

The next act of this opera is played between decks, on Don Pedro's ship, where Inez reclines on a couch, dreamily listening to the sailors' chorus greeting a new day at sea. As they finish, a bell announces morning prayer. All kneel, and while the sailors beseech the aid of St. Dominick, Inez and her attendants pray for heaven's guidance o'er the deep.

All at once, Nelusko appears on the main deck, whence he calls to the sailors that the wind has changed, that a hurricane is imminent, and that unless they steer to the north, they will surely be lost. His call has attracted the attention of Don Pedro and of Don Alvar, and the latter gravely questions whether Nelusko is to be trusted. The cunning slave, whose intentions are even worse than Alvar suspects, now defends himself with feigned meekness, asking whether it was not owing to

him that they learned Vasco's secret plans? Don Pedro readily agrees to this and seems inclined to trust him, although Alvar reminds him that the slave who betrayed one master, may also be false to a second, urging, moreover, that two of their vessels have already come to grief under his guidance.

Nelusko replies that Adamastor,—king of the tempests,—pronounced their doom, and that he will surely seize this vessel also, if they do not soon steer as he directs. After a short discussion, Don Pedro gives the required order, whereat Nelusko sings a queer refrain which attracts the attention of one of the sailors. In reply to the man's query, Nelusko explains that it is the legend of Adamastor, which the sailors clamor to hear in full. So Nelusko sings of the "Spirit of the Tempest," riding over the waves, from whose clutches none can escape, and who dooms all within his reach to watery graves.

The sailors having repeated the latter foreboding words, Nelusko informs them that they too are doomed, laughing with demoniacal glee, as he advises them to prepare, for the storm is drawing near.

Only now the chorus perceive that this is true, and they are already anticipating speedy death, when a sailor suddenly calls out that a

ship, sailing under Portugal's colors, has come into sight, has signaled to them, and sent out a small boat which is already alongside. This news greatly disquiets Nelusko, who, in an aside, expresses a fear lest it may,—even at the eleventh hour,—save ship and crew from the trap into which he has lured them, to prevent their ever reaching his native land.

The boat has accosted the vessel, and the first person to appear on deck is Vasco di Gama. He is warmly welcomed by Don Alvar, who immediately inquires how he got here, and why he has come. Vasco briefly informs him that, favored by wind and tide, he has come to warn them before it is too late. This short statement is repeatedly interrupted by Don Pedro's jealous fears lest Vasco may even yet succeed in winning the honors he covets.

Vasco, however, has nobly forgotten all rivalry and anger, and has hurried thither merely to warn a fellow man that he is steering along the very course which proved so fatal to poor Diaz. But Don Pedro, unable to understand such generosity, angrily summons his crew, and bids them bind this man to the main-staff and shoot him.

His cruel order is greeted by simultaneous

cries from Selika and Inez, both of whom recognize Vasco, who stands proudly there, and brands Don Pedro as a coward. This justly merited epithet occasions a renewal of the order, which Inez and Selika seek to have recalled by falling at Don Pedro's feet, and humbly suing for the prisoner's pardon. But the captain, heedless of their prayers, and of the fast gathering storm, reiterates his order for the third and last time.

Selika, finding Don Pedro obdurate, now resolves to obtain by menace what she failed to secure through prayer. Drawing near Inez, she threatens to kill her, unless Don Pedro free Vasco immediately. Her sudden action, and the instant conviction that she will carry out her threat, first paralyze the captain, as the crew perceive. Soon, however, he recovers a measure of composure, and orders the prisoner down to the hold. His actions having conveyed the idea that he has accepted Selika's alternative, and is sparing Vasco to save Inez, Don Alvar deems this order unfair, and ventures to suggest that the prisoner's ship is still alongside. But Don Pedro hotly denies having given any promise, and says he temporized merely to save his wife. He adds, however, that the slave who ventured to threaten her mistress shall now be bound

and scourged in presence of the crew, a decree which wrings cries of horror from Inez, Selika and Nelusko, the latter menacingly demanding who will dare inflict such an outrage upon a woman and a queen?

It is in the midst of this tumult of passion, that the storm breaks loose with such violence, that Don Alvar hastily bids the men reef the sails, an order issued too late to save the ship from the rocks. Besides, it is now boarded by swarms of Indians, who, in spite of sailors and officers, soon become masters of the vessel. Throughout the fight and confusion, wild cries and exclamations are heard on all sides, and the curtain falls while the kneeling and terrified chorus are still praying aloud.

The fourth act is played in Selika's country, in an open space between an Indian Temple and a palace of oriental appearance. Throngs of Indians have assembled to welcome their returned queen, and renew their pledge of allegiance to her. Nelusko,—no longer a slave, but prime minister of the queen,—begins the ceremony by administering to the people the solemn oath of obedience to the daughter of their ancient kings, an oath to which the chorus unanimously subscribe.

Then, turning to Selika, Nelusko bids her

swear upon the sacred book preserved in yonder temple, to maintain their laws. Selika promises, but even while doing so, expresses in an aside her fears lest some harm may have befallen her beloved Vasco. Queen as she is, however, she dares not question Nelusko or the priest. In spite of the noise made by the tam-tams, and of a distant shriek, the queen is next reminded that according to national laws, no foreigner must ever sojourn on this soil, and when Nelusko adds that all who came hither have already been executed, Selika gasps for terror.

But, before she can expostulate, the High Priest, in an aside, informs Nelusko that the men have indeed all been slain, save one, found chained in the hold of the stranded vessel. Fearing lest this man be Vasco,—whom he dreads more than all the rest,—Nelusko softly bids a priest dispose of this stranger also, and covertly watches his departure, while the High Priest invites Selika into the temple, where the crown awaits her. Escorted by the priests, Selika vanishes into the shrine, and Nelusko is just inviting the Indians to follow her thither, when loud cries startle him. He soon learns that the foreign women are being led to the mancanilla tree, beneath whose deadly shade they are to find a death as sure, although far

less painful, than that which has already befallen their male companions.

Nelusko briefly orders a band of soldiers to escort the women thither, while the priests vociferate a bloody chorus in honor of Siva, god of death, inviting him to descend from the clouds to receive the victims slain in his honor. A moment later Vasco di Gama appears under escort; but, even now, on the brink of the grave, he views with admiration the land he so often saw in his dreams. In a beautiful solo he hails it as the home of sunshine and flowers, and claims the glory of discovery. These raptures, however, are rudely checked by the chorus, clamoring for his death; so, bravely facing the inevitable, Vasco prepares to die like a man, while the chorus again shout their blood-curdling death song.

The axes are raised, and are about to strike, when Selika comes out of the temple, escorted by Nelusko and the High Priest, and closely followed by all her train. Her cry checks the executioners, but when she attempts to rush towards the victim, both Nelusko and the High Priest sternly remind her of the laws and of her oath. Besides, the chorus clamor for the death of this victim also, the High Priest adding that even the women have perished, words which fill

Vasco's heart with sorrow, for he thus learns that Inez has ceased to exist! His grief for her rival cuts Selika to the heart; but when the chorus reiterate their cry of "death to the stranger," she determines to save him.

Seizing Vasco's hand she haughtily demands what her people would say should she prove that this man is no stranger after all. She then enjoins silence upon Vasco in a rapid aside, bidding him subscribe to all she says, as her sole motive is to save his life; next she inquires what the priests would do were this man her brother,—or should fate have linked his life to hers by indissoluble ties?

These questions, interrupted by the chorus and by Nelusko, are swiftly followed by her curt explanation, that during her servitude in foreign lands, this hero preserved her life and honor, by making her his wife. She even calls upon Nelusko to confirm this statement, and when he hesitates, informs him in an aside that should he deny it and the prisoner die, she will surely take her life. So certain does she feel of the effect of this threat, that she repeats aloud that Nelusko will testify in her behalf, and the High Priest sends for the sacred book.

As soon as it has been brought, he administers the oath to Nelusko, who, in an aside, wonders

how he can relinquish all claim to the woman he loves. Meantime the chorus note his doubt and confusion, and Selika, fearing he may even yet prove restive, softly implores him to yield to her wishes. Her entreating glances win the day, and Nelusko, sacrificing honor and long cherished dreams, swears at the chorus' request that Vasco is Selika's spouse.

This oath changes the aspect of affairs: for those, who even now had raised their hands to kill the stranger, now do homage to him as to their King. But, while they thus present their respects, Nelusko, in an aside, calls down heaven's wrath upon his own and his rival's head, and stalks off the stage. A marriage under other skies and laws must however be ratified in their own temple, so the priests go off to make the necessary preparations, leaving Vasco and Selika alone.

This sudden change in his fortunes has amazed Vasco, who looks around him, wondering to find himself still alive. Selika, perceiving his surprise, gradually reveals that she has loved him ever since they first met, and has suffered untold agonies from his scorn, especially when he sold her to a hated rival! Utterly unconscious until now of her devotion, Vasco pleads for forgiveness, for his heart has

been touched, and he considers that he would be guilty of rank ingratitude were he now to repel her. He therefore ends by humbly begging her pardon for all previous offenses, urging that she should not refuse to grant it to the man whom she has publicly called spouse.

The fact that *he* now claims this name, fills Selika with great joy, and, for a short time, she makes him believe that he can repay her love in kind. They therefore unite in a duet, wherein they exchange promises, swearing to live only in the present and future, and to forget the past. This duet is barely over, when a procession appears to escort them to the temple, the High Priest extending his hands over them as they kneel before him, and invoking heaven's blessing upon their union.

Indian maidens crowd around Selika with flowers and scarfs, which are woven together while they chant the bridal veil chorus. Meantime, Vasco gazes with rapture upon the pretty group, of which his bride forms the centre. The joyful wedding chorus is, however, offset by a mournful chant in the background, above which Vasco suddenly catches the pathetic strains of Inez's voice, singing the serenade with which he favored her before leaving for the fatal voyage which blasted all his hopes.

At first, the young navigator fancies it is Inez's spirit voice he hears ; then, overcome by emotion, he makes a movement as if to rush in the direction whence the sounds proceed, but he is caught by the maidens, and gently but forcibly dragged off to the temple, in the wake of Selika, under an arch of rainbow tinted gauze veils. As they march, they repeat the bridal 'veil chorus, which concludes as all disappear within the shrine.

The fifth and last act is begun in the queen's gardens, amid tropical luxuriance of foliage and flowers. Soldiers introduce Inez, whom Selika addresses with severity, inquiring why she has already broken faith. When Inez tries to excuse herself, Selika bitterly silences her, telling her she has now to deal not only with an outraged wife, but an incensed queen. Once more, Inez ventures to speak, only to be again reprobated, and finally challenged to explain how Vasco gained access to her.

Inez replies that chance alone brought about their meeting, and when Selika demands what he was saying, retorts that Vasco had just stated that being bound to the queen in wedlock, his life, faith and gratitude most henceforth be hers only. This declaration does not satisfy the jealous queen, for she exclaims that in spite of

all she has done, her husband still prefers her rival, a fact which Inez cannot disclaim, although she assures her mistress she need have no fear for the future. But, seeing Selika still angry, she begs that the royal wrath may be vented upon her alone, for she would welcome death.

Her readiness to shoulder all the punishment touches Selika, who, realizing at last that Inez is in no wise to blame for this sad state of affairs, grieves softly, while her rival repeatedly urges her to end her woes. Then, after questioning her captive closely, and discovering that both suffer in the same way, Selika's anger vanishes, and nothing but compassion remains. When Inez declares that were Vasco to seek her now, she would refuse to listen to him, because death alone can loose marriage vows, the queen is completely overcome.

Both women give vent to their overwrought feelings, Selika saying that her husband must long for her death to set him free, while Inez,—bereft of all hope,—prays for speedy release. This outburst over, both women become calmer, and Selika perceives a way out of the dilemma which will set everything right, a consummation Inez devoutly hopes may be attained.

When Nelusko and the soldiers return, the queen bids the latter remove Inez, and instructs

them also to convey Vasco far away. Nelusko breathlessly inquires whether both captives are to be sent off together, and the queen assents, bidding him conduct them to the waiting ship, and, when it leaves, to hand Vasco the tablets on which she had just traced a few lines.

This unexpected order fills Nelusko's heart with such joy, that he swears to carry out her instructions to the very letter, congratulating her warmly upon a decision which he cannot but applaud. The queen then directs him to join her on the rocky promontory, where she is going to catch the last glimpse of the vanishing ship. At the mention of this promontory, Nelusko shudders, imploring her to shun the place where the deadly mancanilla grows. The queen replies that she is aware of this fact, but he—still uneasy—explains that those who once inhale the perfume of its blossoms are overcome by a delightful hallucination, which speedily makes way for delirium and death. Selika assures him that in spite of danger, she is determined to go thither, for no other spot affords so extensive a view of the tossing ocean.

The last scene is therefore played on this promontory, where the fatal mancanilla is seen, heavily laden with flowers. Selika is gazing sadly at the sea, which she describes as infinite

and endless, like her woe. After a brief contemplation of the waves at her feet, she draws near the mancanilla tree, confessing that she has come here, after "life's fitful fever," in quest of repose. Gathering some flowers, she inhales their perfume, dreamily remarking that not one angry or envious feeling now remains in her heart. She then gently bids farewell to the lover for whose sake she is about to die, assuring him of her forgiveness, and wishing him every joy. Next she crowns herself with the blossoms,—which remind her of those worn at her wedding,—and seats herself under the tree, dreamily describing the heavenly visions which she beholds. Her rapturous trance,—wherein her lover is restored to her arms,—soon merges into sleep, from which she is roused by the booming of a cannon, announcing the departure of her lover's ship. Seeing it sail away, she utters a wail of despair, exclaiming that she is once more awake, and that the delightful vision of her lover's return was nothing but a delusion.

She is still plunged in an agony of grief when Nelusko rushes on the stage, joyfully proclaiming the departure of a hated rival. He is startled not to find Selika on the rocks, as he expected, and, hearing her voice under the tree,

rushes frantically towards her, and casts himself at her feet. Her ice-cold hand strikes terror into his soul, but when he wildly exclaims that this is death, she smilingly assures him that it is endless bliss, and breathes her last in his arms.

Vowing that he will die with her, Nelusko remains there, until he, too, is overcome by the deadly emanations from the mancanilla tree, and sinks over her lifeless form, while the chorus proclaim that both have now reached the realms where love eternal reigns.

DER FREISCHÜTZ

THE libretto of *Der Freischütz* was written by Kind, the score by Weber,—composer of the world-renowned “*Dernière Pensée*,”—and it was first produced in Berlin, in 1821. Since then, it has been heard in all parts of the world, and is greatly admired everywhere as a genuine German production. A prologue—generally omitted—reveals a wooded height, with a hermitage and rustic altar, before which a monk kneels in prayer. His devotions are interrupted by the recollection of a dream, wherein he perceived a gigantic fist pounce down upon Max, the betrothed of his foster-child Agatha. The remembrance of this dream causes the hermit to pray with a renewed fervor for the young people, in whom he feels a keen interest.

He has just finished his invocation, when Agatha appears, with her handmaiden Annie, who has helped her bring fruit, milk, and bread, the only gifts the holy man will accept. With a gentle word of thanks, Agatha dismisses her attendant; then, stepping forward, presents her

offering, and enters into conversation with the anchorite. In answer to his questions, she soon informs him that if her lover acquits himself creditably, in a trial of skill in the prince's presence on the morrow, he will be chosen as her father's successor, and will receive her hand in marriage.

The youth has always been such a clever marksman, that the hermit opines he must succeed, but Agatha confesses that strange ill-chance seems to pursue him recently, for during the past fortnight he has missed every shot, and brought home no game. When the hermit confides to her that he has been haunted by a vision, vaguely foreshadowing trouble for them both, she implores him to intercede in their behalf for heavenly protection.

Agatha is about to leave, when the holy man, yielding to an impulse, breaks off some white roses above the altar, and gives them to her, saying that the bush whereon they grew was brought from Palestine, and that those roses are endowed with mysterious protective powers. In a beautiful duet, he also hints that they may ward off evil from her, while she assures him that she will prize his gift because she loves him as a father.

In most cases, the opera begins with the first

act, immediately after the overture—an epitome of the work. The curtain, rising, reveals an inn in the woods, near which a group of peasants are holding a rural shooting match. Max is seated at a table, moodily watching Killian, a peasant, who hits the bull's-eye, and utters a loud cry of victory, which is echoed by the crowd of spectators. This shot evidently ends the match, and the customary triumphal march is prepared, wherein all the spectators take part, bearing the trophies they have won during the day. The principal feature is the victor Killian, closely followed by a small boy with the remains of the target.

While they form ranks, Max bitterly comments on their noisy demonstrations, and moodily wonders how he can have failed every time to hit the mark. Then the march begins, and the people circle round and round the stage, all pointing the finger of scorn at Max, who, according to a time-honored custom, is considered a butt, because he has not hit the target once !

Their jeers are endured in silence, until Killian pauses before him, mockingly challenging his admiration, and taunting him so unmercifully, that the young huntsman rises in wrath, to attack his tormentor. He has drawn a dag-

ger, and is about to use it, when the Ranger, Kuno, his superior, appears with his men, and with authoritative voice and gesture separates the combatants. The Ranger sternly inquires the meaning of this scene, and when Killian explains in a shame-faced and embarrassed manner, flatly refuses to believe that one of his men can have been surpassed in skill by a mere peasant, or can have missed every round as he declares.

When Max confirms the latter statement, the Ranger shakes his head in dismay, finding no explanation for such an unaccountable state of affairs. But, while he is at a loss to understand this ill-luck, Caspar, another of his men, mutters that it is only too plain that the demon, Samiel, has been at work. He artfully suggests that a spell may have been cast upon Max, a remark which the Ranger treats with scorn, roughly silencing Caspar when the latter goes on to suggest that Max should betake himself to a crossroad at midnight, draw a magic circle, and call upon the Wild Huntsman for aid.

Turning to Max, the Ranger reminds him that his skill is to be seriously tested on the morrow, and that if he does not earn the prince's good opinion, he shall not marry Agatha. This reminder of the morrow's test appals Max

When the people inquire why the position of Ranger should depend upon what is known as the "Test Shot" throughout that region, Kuno reminds them that his ancestor, the one whose portrait adorns his wall, was once scouring the forest with the prince, when they suddenly beheld a stag to whose horns an unfortunate man had been bound—the usual punishment for an inveterate poacher. In pity for the wretch's suffering, the prince promised the position of Head Ranger to any huntsman who could bring down the stag without injuring the victim, declaring at the same time that any bungler should pay the penalty of a false shot by his death. Moved, more by compassion for the unfortunate poacher, than by hope of gain, Kuno's ancestor had boldly aimed and slain the stag, thus freeing the poor serf, who was found quite uninjured. Since then, the Ranger's successors had always been forced to show their skill by shooting at any mark their lord chose to point out, when the final test took place.

Having told this tale—which is often omitted—to an admiring audience, Kuno bids Max take heart for the morrow, mischievously suggesting that the spell under which he labors may merely be that of the blind huntsman Love.

A trio ensues in which the Ranger and Cas-

par, in different ways, try to hearten up Max for his trial. The Ranger reminds him that he must succeed under penalty of forfeiting his love, while Caspar again hints that there are sure means of conciliating Fortune. Max, in melancholy prevision of failure, pictures his despair should he lose his beloved, and his mournful looks so enlist the sympathies of huntsmen and peasants, that all in turn encourage him to win a position for life and a beautiful bride.

The Ranger next bids his men scatter until the morrow, and they pass off the stage singing a huntsman's chorus, which meets with the peasants' approval. When his companions have gone, Max resumes his seat at the table, and Killian—master of the revels—bids the people enter the inn, and feast at his expense. As the dancing music strikes up, he proffers an apology for his previous act of courtesy, wishing Max all luck on the morrow, and cordially inviting him to select a partner and join in the dance. But Max refuses so shortly, that Killian joins the dancers, and disappears with them in the inn, leaving Max alone on the stage.

In a beautiful aria the young hunter describes his former luck in the chase, and the rapture of his betrothed. As he goes on to mention his late mischance, the stage is suddenly darkened

by the presence of the evil spirit, Samiel, hovering in the background, and listening intently, in hope of finding some means to get this victim in his toils. But, when the youth mentions Providence, and the pure girl who loves him, the evil spirit has to withdraw from the stage, which again becomes lighter. Meanwhile, Max sings of Agatha, who is doubtless awaiting his return, and hoping that he will bring home some prize or choice bit of game, in earnest of his success on the morrow.

Once more he bemoans his ill-luck, and as he does so, the evil spirit again hovers in the background, to vanish only when he prays for protection against fate which is driving him to despair. As Max finishes this invocation, Caspar, gun in hand, comes singing on the stage, declaring he is glad to find his companion still there. Max receives him rather coldly, but Caspar vows he has come back to do him a favor, by showing him how he can win his bride. Peering into the crock on the table, Caspar scornfully remarks that beer is not the drink to drive away sorrow, and orders wine, which is brought by one of the barmaids, who is told to "chalk it up."

As the maid passes into the inn again, Max explains that he does not wish to drink any

more, for his head is already somewhat confused; but Caspar, who has secretly poured a mysterious drug into his companion's glass, now fills it with wine, and with a subdued invocation to the demon Samiel, pushes it towards his friend, inviting him to drink.

Max has paid no heed to his companion's doings, but has been somewhat startled by the sound of an unusual name, and lazily inquires with whom Caspar was speaking? But the young huntsman denies having addressed any one save him, and again suggests that it might be well for Max to secure some token, which would inspire his betrothed with confidence for the morrow. When Max sighs and says he has vainly striven to do so, Caspar artfully offers to help him, volunteering the information,—once imparted to him by an old huntsman,—that on certain nights in the year, one can summon the demon's aid, and cast seven bullets, all of which are sure to hit any mark at which they are aimed.

At first, Max refuses to listen to him, but Caspar thrusts his gun into the young man's hand, bidding him test one of the magic bullets, and be convinced of their power. Still indifferent, Max idly holds the weapon; after a brief scrutiny of the sky, and an appeal to the

demon, Caspar suddenly descries an eagle, far up in the air, and bids Max shoot at that prey.

The experienced marksman scornfully replies that the eagle is out of range of any gun, but even while talking, his finger unconsciously comes in contact with the trigger, and the gun goes off. The sky darkens, a whirr of wings is heard, and as Max turns away, a huge eagle falls at his feet. Max gazes in amazement at this prey. He does not believe it was brought down by the bullet he fired, until Caspar assures him it is the result of that shot. Pulling out a few feathers from the eagle's wing, Caspar now sticks them in Max's hat, bidding him wear these plumes in token of his skill, for few hunters have ever succeeded in slaying so large an eagle. Still astonished, Max inquires what kind of a bullet was in the gun, for he fully realizes that the lucky shot was not due to his skill. When he urges Caspar to tell him how to obtain such bullets, the huntsman informs him that this is the last, but that fortunately he can procure more that very night.

He goes on to describe, that while in the army he had learned many good and bad things, among others that a huntsman armed with magic bullets could bring down any quarry he pleased. Then, reminding Max that his position and

wife depend upon his skill on the morrow, and that if he only had some of those magic bullets his success would be fully assured, he informs him, that by drawing a magic circle in the "Wolf's Ravine" at midnight, and calling upon the aid of the demon, seven unerring bullets can be cast. Max receives this statement incredulously, but, goaded by Caspar's taunts of cowardice, and especially by the fear of losing the girl he loves, he finally consents to go with his tempter, who undertakes to do all that is necessary, and even cast the bullets for him. It is only when Caspar has used all his arts, however, and has depicted Agatha dying of grief because her lover has not been successful, that the young man consents to have anything to do with this companion, whom an inner voice warns him not to trust. A clock having struck seven when Max shot the eagle, the young huntsman departs, promising to meet Caspar at midnight, in the appointed spot. As he vanishes the stage grows dark, and Caspar sings a song^{*} of hideous triumph, in which he depicts his joy at having secured a new victim for the evil spirit who has him in his toils, for he has thereby won a reprieve of three years.

As the curtain rises for the second act, we are transported into the Ranger's house, in the

heart of the forest, where his daughter and her handmaiden are quite busy. The portrait of the ancestor,—whose story the Ranger told—has accidentally fallen, wounding Agatha, who is holding a handkerchief to her brow, to staunch the blood. Annie has climbed up on a chair, hammer in hand, and is driving in a nail to rehang the picture. While banging away with all her might, she sings an arch song, speaking rather disrespectfully of old Kuno, until Agatha admonishes her to treat him with due veneration. Annie pretends that some of her remarks were intended for the nail, and not for the portrait, and the girls sing together, while Annie steps down and puts aside her hammer.

Then Agatha confesses that she has been haunted all day by premonitions of evil, and Annie pokes fun at her, saying that brides are always nervous, and that she will soon get over these silly fancies. Once more the girls join in a duet, in which Agatha tries to dismiss her fears, while Annie assists her by declaring that fancy is delusive. She adds that her companion's presentiment of evil has been justified by the accident which has happened to her, and Agatha is delighted to find that the hermit's vision can be interpreted by the fall of the picture, which has done but trifling harm.

Annie gaily sings a song illustrative of the coquettish airs assumed by a girl when a handsome suitor draws near, and of the various phases through which loving couples pass before the preliminary stages are over, and they become husband and wife. Her song is so merry, that it gradually overcomes Agatha's fears, and she chimes in, to Annie's great delight, for she likes to see her young mistress free from care, and does not understand why she should have been so melancholy throughout the day.

When Agatha says that she wishes to keep the Hermit's roses for the morrow, Annie rises to carry them out, declaring that if she puts them in the dew, they will remain just as fresh as they are now. Annie also advises her mistress to follow her example and come to bed, but Agatha replies that she cannot retire until she has seen her lover, whom she still expects.

Left alone, the loving girl comments on Max's absence, goes to the window, gazes out into the moonlight, and sings softly to herself about the moon and stars, praying that hosts of angels may always watch over her lover and guard him from all evil. She has had time to become quite impatient, however, before she hears the sound of Max's tread, and sees him appear between the pines. Seizing a handker-

chief, she waves a signal of welcome, commenting that he seems to wear a bunch of flowers, such as always adorns the hat of a victor in the shooting-contest. She therefore feels sure he has won in the match, and clasps her hands with delight, thinking it a good omen for the morrow. Thanking heaven for this boon, she goes to meet her lover, and a few moments later both step into the room, where Max is placing his gun against a chair, when Annie enters from the other side.

Agatha now notices that instead of the bouquet she had hoped to see, there is a bunch of eagle's feathers on her lover's hat. Meantime, Max somewhat abruptly begs her pardon for his delay, explaining that he can only stay a moment, for clouds are rapidly gathering. He flings his hat down on the table, and extinguishes the light, so that one can see a gradually darkening landscape, illuminated by vivid lightning flashes. Annie says it is good the moon is still shining, or they would be in total darkness, then, relighting the lamp, she mockingly inquires whether Max has been dancing at the inn. He answers her indifferently, but when Agatha questions him, explains that although he has brought home no prize from the match, he has killed an eagle, and must go to

the "Wolf's Ravine," in quest of other quarry to be found there.

Agatha shudders at the mere mention of this place, and implores her lover not to go thither. But he insists, and is about to take leave, when he becomes aware of the bruise on her brow, and the drops of blood in her hair. Terrified, he inquires what has befallen her, and while Agatha tries to put him off by saying he will have no cause to be ashamed of his bride, Annie bluntly informs him how the accident happened. When Max learns that it occurred just as the clock was striking seven—the very moment when he used the fatal bullet,—he is seized with sudden terror, and utters an exclamation which frightens both girls. He will not, however, answer Agatha's questions, and she, in her turn, soon incurs his displeasure by showing no appreciation of the gift he has brought her, vowing that birds of prey have something so ominous, that she cannot rejoice even at the death of one of them. Still, she soon assures her lover that her affection is quite unchanged, and that should he not be successful on the morrow she would die of grief. Max exclaims that it is to prevent such a catastrophe that he is going forth that night, and when she wonders what he means, repeats his excuse that he has

killed a stag, which peasants will steal if he does not bring it home before daylight.

Agatha is horrified at the idea of his venturing alone near the "Wolf's Ravine," and Annie gratuitously informs him that the Wild Huntsman haunts that place. But Max tells both girls that fear has no room in a hunter's heart, that he is familiar with all the terrors of the forest by night, and is afraid of nothing, so long as he is sure of winning his bride on the morrow. Both girls try to detain him, but he insists upon going, in spite of Agatha's pleading, pointing to the moonlight, which he says will guide him along his way, and prevent his meeting with any accident. Still, it is only when he assures his betrothed that duty calls, that she consents to let him go, bidding him a tender farewell. Once more the two girls express fear for him, and when he jauntily declares that a huntsman's life is risky at all times, and that they must not tremble for him, charge him to keep his betrothed constantly in mind until the morrow, when they know he will win her for his wife.

There is now a transformation scene, for the spectator beholds the depths of the "Wolf's Ravine," where great rocks, dark pines, noisy cascades, hooting owls, and phosphorescent trees, make a gruesome combination. It is

nearly midnight, the moon shines faintly, and the clouds chase madly over the sky, as Caspar appears without hat or jacket, and lays stones in a circle, placing in the centre a skull, the wing of the eagle Max had shot, a melting pan and bullet mould.

While he is thus occupied, voices from unseen spirits on all sides sing a weird incantation, to which the hooting of the owl forms an uncanny refrain. As Caspar finishes his preparations, a distant clock slowly tolls twelve. When the last stroke falls upon his ear, Caspar draws his dagger, and plunging it into the skull, brandishes it aloft, calling out in a loud voice for Samiel. In response, a great roar is heard, there is an earthquake, and the rocks part to give passage to the demon. As Samiel rises out of the ground, Caspar falls at his feet, and when the demon inquires why he was summoned, timidly explains that he called the demon to ask for a reprieve. When Samiel refuses to grant it, he bribes him by offering his companion, whom he has induced to come hither and place himself in the demon's power by the promise of unfailing bullets. Samiel now reminds Caspar that six of these bullets never fail their aim, but that the seventh must always be directed against any victim he selects, and Caspar, finding that the

demon will not be satisfied with Max alone, tells him that he can also gain possession of the girl, who is sure to follow her lover wherever he goes, were it even to perdition. The demon finally consents to accept Max and his bride in exchange for Caspar, but warns the latter that unless he keep his promise, and deliver both young people into his power, he will be dragged down into hell. Having declared "you or he, to-morrow," Samiel disappears with a crash of thunder, which is repeated by the echoes of the ravine.

With Samiel the skull also has disappeared, and in its stead one sees a smouldering fire, whereon Caspar now places the melting kettle. He is just wiping the perspiration from his brow, when he hears a coming tread, and turning around listens attentively, while the owls hoot and flap their wings. As Max bends over the edge of the ravine, he exclaims over its dark depths, saying that the clouds have assumed an uncanny appearance and look like spirits. When Caspar sees him, threading his way down the steep path, he utters an exclamation of relief, and of gratitude to the demon, who is helping him secure a substitute.

Welcoming Max from afar, he points to the fire and the melting lead: but, when the young

huntsman recognizes the eagle's wing, and cries out in terror, "Woe is me!" he harshly urges him to come down and set to work, for the time is pressing. Max still hesitates, points with a trembling hand at the apparitions, and declares that one of those veiled ghosts is his mother, warning him to desist.

When in answer to Caspar's desperate appeal, the demon sends a wraith of Agatha, wringing her hands and about to commit suicide by plunging into the stream, Max comes rushing down to save her; but this spectre vanishes as soon as he has been decoyed into the ravine, while the moon hides behind a cloud, and the fire burns up more brightly.

Caspar now urges his companion to take a pull at his hunting flask, so as to gain courage for his work, but in spite of his persuasions, Max obstinately refuses to cast the bullets. Still, he allows himself to be drawn within the magic circle, and listens in an indifferent way while Caspar cautions him not to pay any heed should a stranger appear to help them, should a rider on a black steed rush past, or anything else occur. It is only when Caspar himself shows signs of terror, that Max is to feel any apprehension, although if he repeats the words he hears his companion utter, no evil can befall him.

Even now, at the last hour, Max is anxious to withdraw, but his companion promptly silences him, and puts into the pot the right materials—lead from a broken church window, some quicksilver, the right eye of a hoopoe, and the left of a lynx. In a melodramatic way, he next sings a weird incantation, wherein the name of Samiel is repeated several times. When the lead melts, a greenish glow appears, the moon again vanishes behind a cloud, and the phosphorescent trees, and the round eyes of the owl, shine with a demoniacal brilliancy.

Caspar is deftly casting his bullets, each number he counts being repeated by the echo. As the first bullet drops from the mould, night birds come fluttering down and perch around the magic circle. At the second, a wild boar rushes past them ; at the third, a violent storm rages through the trees, snapping great branches ; at the fourth there is trampling of horses and rolling of wheels ; after the fifth a ghostly huntsman with hounds dashes across the scene, while the ominous chorus of the Wild Hunt is heard, and Caspar shudders and cries aloud “Woe !” When the sixth bullet has been made, rocks fall, and the din in the ravine becomes almost infernal ; but when the seventh and last bullet drops, Caspar is actually hurled

to the ground by an invisible hand, and saves himself only by crying aloud for Samiel ! This cry is repeated by the echo, and by the unfortunate Max, who, terrified by the storm, springs out of the magic circle and seizes a branch of the withered tree. As he touches it, it is transformed into Samiel, the Wild Huntsman, who in awful tones declares : "Here I am." But, at a sign of the cross from Max, this demon instantly vanishes, just as a distant clock strikes one. The magic hour is past, so Caspar and Max slowly rise and shake off the effects of their terror.

The third act shows a clearing in the woods, where all is prepared for the shooting test. Gay hunting music is heard, and two huntsmen comment upon the clear weather following a stormy night, during which a cyclone has swept through the "Wolf's Ravine," the rumored haunt of the Wild Huntsman. They are still exchanging their views on this subject, when Max and Caspar come on the scene, pale and panting, to receive the congratulations and good wishes of the men, who have just witnessed three wonderful shots the former has made. As these men pass out of sight, Max demands more of the magic bullets, although he has already had four out of the seven, and Caspar refuses to give him any,

telling him the one still in his possession will suffice for his test shot.

Max is feverishly insisting upon having another bullet, when a huntsman appears to summon him into the presence of the prince, and he has no sooner left, than Caspar shoots off his third and last magic bullet at random, fearing lest it be taken from him, and Samiel deprived of the prey which the seventh bullet is to secure for him.

The scene again changes to Agatha's bedroom, where, dressed in bridal array, she kneels and prays for the last time in her maiden bower. As she finishes, Annie comes in, and comments merrily upon her companion's tears, vowing she too has not slept, but owing, however, solely to the storm, which threatened to tear off the roof. Agatha now confesses that she has had a bad dream, wherein it seemed to her that she had been transformed into a dove, and that Max, aiming at her, brought her to the ground. Then, the dove vanished, and she, Agatha, found herself lying in a swoon, while a huge bird of prey weltered in blood beside her.

Annie receives this description with derision, and gives a witty interpretation of the dream, wherein the bridal robe represents the white dove, the eagle shot by Max the bird of prey,

and the blood, the few drops she shed when wounded by the falling picture. But Agatha, who cannot immediately shake off all fear, insists that dreams are sometimes fulfilled, until Annie sings a burlesque ballad, about a cousin's absurd dream concerning a terrible ghost, which turned out to be the house dog !

As Agatha is somewhat offended by the ludicrous end of what bade fair to be a tragical story, Annie humbly begs her pardon, and seeks to cheer her by tender, instead of mocking arts. Then, she runs off to get the bridal wreath, which she brings back, as the bridesmaids crowd into the room in festive apparel. Greetings are exchanged, and the bridesmaids' chorus sung, at the end of which, the gaily decked pasteboard box is produced. Just then, Annie exclaims that old Kuno's picture has fallen a second time, and that she has nearly broken her leg by tripping over it. This news fills Agatha's heart with dismay, so Annie seeks to divert her by calling for a repetition of the bridesmaids' chorus, at the end of which the box is solemnly opened. But, instead of the usual chorus of raptures, deep silence reigns, and all fall back aghast, for the box contains only a funeral wreath. At first Annie tries to conceal this fact from her mistress, then she

volubly explains that the error is surely due to the old messenger woman, who, being half blind, doubtless placed the wrong wreath in the box.

It is too late to repair the mistake, however, and as a bride cannot appear in public without a wreath, Agatha opines that this may be a sign from heaven, and that she will wear the white roses the old Hermit gave her. Annie, therefore, takes the roses from the little home-altar, deftly twines them in Agatha's hair, and finally vows that they are far more becoming than any work of the milliner's hand. Then the maidens resume their joyful chorus, and two by two escort the beautiful bride out of the room.

The scene now changes back to the forest clearing, where the game shot during the day is picturesquely disposed. The beaters are feasting after their labors, and at the head of the long table sits the prince, surrounded by courtiers and friends. In groups around, are huntsmen and pages, and a merry hunting chorus rouses the forest echoes.

As it ends, the prince steps forward, and addressing Kuno, graciously approves of Max,—his future son-in-law,—as his successor. Kuno warmly recommends the young man to His Royal Highness, who next bids Max prepare for the test shot. Meantime, with a heart filled

with bitterness against Agatha, who once scorned his wooing, Caspar is longing for her appearance, so he can have his revenge. In his anxiety he calls upon Samiel, and climbs a neighboring tree in hopes of descrying her coming sooner.

While the prince exchanges a few remarks with Kuno, Max draws out and gazes upon his last magic bullet, commenting softly upon its unusual weight. His agitation is ascribed by old Kuno to a lover's tremors, but the prince is somewhat surprised at such lack of coolness on the part of a young man, whom he has just seen exhibit three proofs of uncommon skill. Both men, however, laughingly admit that on their respective wedding days, they were not models of composure either, and the prince good-naturedly bids Max give one more token of the skill he displayed throughout the day. As the prince is free to indicate any goal he pleases, he indulgently selects a very easy mark—a white dove perched upon a neighboring tree.

Max is just taking aim, when Agatha appears directly in front of him with her bridesmaids. At the sight of the dove, she hysterically exclaims, "Don't shoot, I am the dove!" as the gun goes off, and Caspar comes tumbling down from the tree, uttering piercing cries.

A scene of confusion ensues, the chorus loudly exclaiming that the unfortunate huntsman has evidently slain his own bride who has sunk down on the grass. Fortunately, Agatha soon comes out of her swoon, and to the great joy of father, bridegroom, attendants and spectators, declares she has not been hurt at all. But just then, the chorus exclaims that the shot has slain Caspar, who, in his death throes reveals that he saw the Hermit protecting Agatha from certain death.

While Max, Agatha, Annie, Kuno and the chorus, express their rapture over Agatha's miraculous escape, and while all are still returning fervent thanks, the demon suddenly rises from below, and, unnoticed by the rest of the people, gazes fixedly at Caspar, who wildly curses him and dies. Samiel has vanished, as suddenly and silently as he appeared, but the sound of the dying man's curse has again called the chorus' attention to Caspar. All now express their horror that he should have passed away with a curse upon his lips, Kuno only declaring that the man has died as he lived,—a hardened sinner,—a verdict which the chorus cannot but confirm.

The prince, hearing for the first time that Caspar has made a pact with the Prince of

Darkness, sternly orders that his body be cast into the "Wolf's Ravine," and while some of his men remove the corpse, turns to Max, and demands an explanation, which the young huntsman gives with touching simplicity. When Max reveals that he has actually used four demon bullets cast by the deceased, the prince is struck with such horror, that he not only banishes the huntsman, but forbids him ever to hope for Agatha's hand.

In vain, Kuno, Agatha, Annie, and a chorus of huntsmen and maidens plead for the youth, whose record is otherwise irreproachable. The prince is about to reiterate the sentence of banishment, when the Hermit comes upon the scene, demanding sadly, in his turn, how one frail mortal dare judge another so relentlessly. Instantly recognizing a man known far and wide for piety and good judgment, the prince volunteers to leave the matter entirely to him, and the holy man decrees that the test-shot shall never again take place, and that as Max has hitherto been blameless, he shall be granted a year of grace, during which he may, by good conduct, recover the esteem of all, and win the hand of his beloved.

This decree satisfies not only the prince and spectators, but fills Agatha's heart with joy. In

a sextette, the principal characters express their relief at the turn affairs have taken, then the Hermit directs them to return thanks to heaven, and all join in a solemn hymn of praise, as the curtain falls.

THE MAGIC FLUTE

THE Magic Flute (*Zauberflöte* or *Il Flauto Magico*) was first performed in Vienna in 1791. The libretto, by Schikaneder is a tissue of absurdities, some of which were taken from one of Wieland's extravagant tales, while the remainder are additions of his own. To this plot,—which by its oddities offers a great variety of styles for music,—Mozart added a beautiful score, which is still enjoyed as keenly as it was on the first production of the opera.

The scene opens in Egypt, at the time when Rameses the Great was king. Tall palm-trees, and other plants of tropical growth, partly conceal a temple, where Isis and Osiris are worshipped, while in another part one dimly discerns the castle of the Queen of Night. After the overture,—which is noted for its beautiful fugue—the hero, Prince Tamino, is seen rushing across the stage, closely pursued by a huge serpent which threatens to devour him. It is impossible for him to escape, his strength is already giving way, and he stumbles and falls

fainting to the ground. As he loses consciousness, and the serpent is about to devour him, three ladies, veiled in black,—the attendants of the Queen of Night,—rush out of the castle with their silver bows. They are perfect markswomen, so the snake soon succumbs, after which the three ladies rave over the beauty of the fainting youth, whose coming they wish to announce to their queen, who has long awaited a champion to recover her kidnapped daughter.

A contest arises between the ladies, each one of whom desires to remain alone with the youth, and urges the other two to go and bear the news of his coming to the Queen of Night. After some dispute all go away together, and Tamino, coming to his senses, wonders where he is and how the serpent was slain.

Just then, a sylvan flute is heard in the distance, and he beholds a strange creature, whose garb consists mainly of gay colored feathers. This is the fowler, Papageno, who spends his days in the forest, catching birds to sell to the Queen of Night. He comes on the scene, singing a gay little air describing his occupation, and concludes with an amorous wish that he were as clever at snaring maidens' hearts as in securing game.

As he ends this song, Tamino hails him to enquire what he may be? Papageno, somewhat offended by this query, declares that any one can see he is a man, a remark which Tamino answers by explaining that his strange dress and the sound of his flute were misleading at first. Papageno,—an inveterate chatterbox,—boasts that he has a giant's strength, and that when he lays hands on any one they cannot escape. This remark causes Tamino to suspect that Papageno slew the serpent, so he inquires whether he really owes his life to so strange a preserver? At first, Papageno does not understand, but quickly perceiving the advantage he can reap from Tamino's fortunate delusion, he boldly claims the honor of having killed the snake, jauntily declaring that he needs no weapons to accomplish his purpose, his bare fingers being quite strong enough.

He has scarcely finished this wanton falsehood, when the three veiled damsels reappear. Tamino, who has not seen them before, asks who they may be, and Papageno explains, adding that they purchase all the birds he can catch, giving him in exchange cakes, wine and fruit. Tamino then suggests that they must be very beautiful, but Papageno opines that if they were really good-looking, they would surely be

anxious to reveal their charms, and would not be so closely veiled.

This remark, overheard by the ladies, rouses their ire. Papageno tries to disarm them by handing over the birds he is bringing, but they produce a golden padlock, telling him it is sent by their queen, to be placed on the mouth of the man who scorns the truth. While the first lady fastens the magic padlock on Papageno's lips, the second one bestows upon Tamino an exquisite miniature, a portrait of the daughter of the Queen of Night. Then with a mocking farewell to Papageno—who is archly advised not to talk or eat too much,—the three veiled women pass out of sight.

In an exquisite aria, Tamino expresses his admiration of the beautiful face in the picture, declaring that he has fallen in love with it at first sight, and that he will never rest until he can secure this princess as his wife. As he registers this vow, the ladies reappear, to announce that their mistress has overheard his words, that she is charmed with his devotion, and that she means to take advantage of his love to try and recover her daughter. By dint of questions, Tamino learns that Princess Pamina has been carried away by a tyrant, whereupon he swears not to rest until he has rescued her.

This oath mysteriously calls forth grand and solemn strains of music. In wonder, Tamino asks the ladies what this harmony may mean, so they explain that it always heralds the coming of their beautiful monarch, who now suddenly appears. In a beautiful recitative, the Queen of the Night informs Tamino that only such a youth as he,—pious and innocent,—can comfort her for the loss of the daughter who has been taken away from her. Then, in a wonderful aria, she describes her loneliness until the recovery of this daughter, whom her love is not sufficient to rescue. It is, however, within the prince's power to deliver Pamina, so she urges him to do so, promising him the princess's hand as a reward.

The Queen of the Night then vanishes with her three ladies, leaving Tamino and Papageno alone. At first, the prince can scarcely believe what he has seen and heard, but he vows that if love can aid or inspire him, he will be successful, for he is ready to fight and die, if need be, to save his beloved. He is about to set out at a venture, in quest of the captive princess, when Papageno detains him, pointing with mumbling sounds to the padlock on his lips. Tamino, aware that it was placed there to punish the fowler for lying, gravely informs him that he can

only pity, but has no power to free him, however he might like to do so. But just then the three ladies once more come forward, and one of them removes the padlock from Papageno's lips, declaring that the queen has decided to remit his punishment. Papageno gleefully announces that he can talk once more, but the ladies assure him that while he may chatter all he please, he must never lie again. So the fowler solemnly promises never to tamper with the truth as long as he lives, and he and Tamino join the ladies in a quintette, declaring that were a padlock placed on the lips of all liars, much of the trouble in the world would cease, and love and friendship would no longer be exposed to so many trials. The ladies next bestow a magic flute upon Tamino, telling him that it is a present from the Queen of the Night, who, unable to guide him herself, sends him this instrument, bidding him sound it whenever he is in danger. The second lady adds that the flute also has the power of winning love for the player, and the five actors unite in extolling the magic gift.

When Papageno makes a move to leave the scene, the ladies inform him that the Queen of the Night has chosen him to guide the prince Tamino to Sarastro's tower, where the princess

is detained in captivity. The fowler begins by refusing this task,—for Sarastro has threatened to pluck and roast him like a bird and feed him to his dogs,—but the ladies remind him that Tamino has the power to protect him, and further bestows upon him a box containing a set of magic bells. Full of curiosity, Papageno shakes it; when told that the tinkling sound he hears is produced by magic bells, he naively inquires whether he may ring them whenever he pleases, and is disappointed when the ladies advise him to sound them only when danger threatens. After both men have joined them in praise of the new gift, a last inquiry from Tamino elicits the fact that three youths with golden wings are to serve as guides, to lead him and Papageno straight to the castle of Sarastro. After an exchange of farewells, the actors depart in different directions, and the curtain falls.

The next scene represents a room in an Egyptian palace, richly decorated and full of oriental curiosities. As the curtain rises, Pamina is led on the scene by slaves, under the direction of Monostatos, their chief. Although merely the guardian of the princess—whom Sarastro has carried away from her mother to preserve her from the evil influence of Night and Darkness,—this Moor has fallen madly in love with the

princess, and annoys her with his attentions. When he calls her "dove," she retorts that he is a monster, and when he threatens to kill her if she does not listen to him, she declares death would have no terrors, did she not fear her mother's grief.

At a sign from Monostatos, the slaves chain poor Pamina, and when they have secured her so that she can neither flee nor defend herself, the Moor bids his assistants depart, leaving him alone with his captive. But, just as the slaves pass out, Papageno suddenly appears on the scene, wondering where he may be and what it is he sees? He has barely perceived that the object of his wonder is a beautiful maiden, when the Moor, turning suddenly, becomes aware of his presence. He is amazed at the queer costume of Papageno, who is equally terrified at the sight of the Moor's dark and scowling face. By a queer coincidence, they mistake each other for demons, and, both being arrant cowards, flee in opposite directions, calling aloud for mercy!

Left alone in a faint, Pamina's first words on recovering her senses, are a piteous call for the mother she loves, not knowing she is wicked. While Pamina wonders when her trials will be over, and when she will be able to

escape from the power of her cruel tyrant, Papageno,—who has recovered courage on finding that he is not pursued,—comes stealing back. Seeing nothing but a lovely maiden in the apartment, he softly exclaims that perchance *she* may be the daughter of the Queen of the Night!

At these words, Pamina inquires who he is, and learning that he has been sent by her mother, asks whether he knows the princess. Papageno assures her that while he has often seen the mother, the daughter is quite unknown to him, although he has a portrait whereby he can identify her. With that, he draws the miniature from his breast, and comparing it with the princess before him, naively remarks that the maiden is just like the portrait, save that she has hands and feet, while the picture boasts of a head alone! The princess, recognizing her own likeness in the miniature he holds, now inquires how he obtained it? So the fowler explains that the real owner of the portrait,—a handsome prince,—is dying for love of her. He even offers to lead her to him, and in a duet, both sing of the power of love, which fills the hearts of men and women with a rapture beyond compare.

The next scene opens in a sacred grove, near the temple, where Sarastro, the high priest, presides over the worship of the gods, and encour-

ages everything that is good and beautiful. As the curtain rises, Tamino is led into this grove by three youths, bearing flowering branches in their hands. As they go before him, they chant that this path will lead him to his goal, but that if he would be successful, he must show indomitable constancy, be faithful, and keep silence. Tamino asks whether by doing thus he can rescue his beloved, but they reply that they cannot tell him anything more, and can only urge him to obey their injunctions, if he would obtain success.

As the three guides vanish, Tamino expresses a fervent desire to engrave their instructions upon his heart; then, gazing around him to discover where he is, declares that as his purpose is noble, and his intentions pure, Pamina's tyrant cannot triumph over him. He is about to knock at the nearest gate of the temple, when a mysterious voice bids him pause; he therefore concludes to try another door, but, the same cry being repeated, he goes on to the third, where he loudly demands admittance.

As the door swings open, an aged priest appears, inquiring what the stranger is seeking in their temple? When Tamino boldly replies that he has come to the seat of honor and virtue for advice, the priest replies that his words are

worthy of a noble heart, but inquires how he can hope to succeed when impelled by vengeance. Tamino retorts that it is sometimes permissible to seek revenge, but the priest assures him that no criminal can ever be admitted within their holy precincts. The prince then asks whether Sarastro is master of the temple of wisdom, and on receiving an affirmative answer, bitterly declares that in that case virtue and hypocrisy must be interchangeable terms.

He is about to turn away in despair, when the priest asks him why he should hate Sarastro. Tamino explains that the priest has torn Pamina from a loving mother's arms, a crime which his hearer calmly acknowledges. But when Tamino haughtily inquires whether the poor girl has already been sacrificed, the priest gravely replies that it is his duty to remain silent, until friendship's hand leads the prince to the Sanctuary of immortal union.

With these oracular words the priest departs, and Tamino stands there, wondering aloud what they may mean, and when he will be able to understand them! This question is answered by a mystic choir, chanting that it will be "soon or never," a promise which Tamino is inclined to interpret in a hopeful sense. But, still unsatisfied, he inquires whether the princess whom

he seeks is still alive. When the mysterious voices answer affirmatively, Tamino utters a sigh of relief, and seizing his flute, expresses heartfelt thanks for tidings which fill his heart with joy.

Because this flute has the power of melting even the hardest stone, he hopes it may soon enable him to win the love of Pamina, whom he swears to follow all over the world. His exquisite notes are answered by a sweet tone, which he recognizes as the pipe of Papageno, who, he hopes, has meantime discovered the princess.

A game of hide-and-seek ensues upon the stage, where, misled by sound, the prince goes off in one direction, while Papageno and Pamina appear on the other side. As they come forward, hand in hand, they express joy at having escaped, and dread of being overtaken by the Moor, and dragged back to prison. Their incautious calls for Tamino, evidently attract the attention of the princess's keepers, who soon come rushing out to seize her. Monostatos roughly bids the slaves use their chains and ropes to secure these obstreperous young people, and while they bewail their hard fate, his minions produce the bonds which are to bind them. Suddenly remembering his

magic box, Papageno rings his bells, imploring them to come to his rescue, for he is surely in mortal peril. With the first tinkle of the bells, the spell begins to work, and Monostatos and his slaves are obliged to dance, vowing—that music has charms they cannot resist, and that they are entirely disarmed by its magic power.

While Pamina and Papageno watch their antics, priests come out of the temple, and solemn strains of music soon announce that Sarastro is near. He rides on the stage in a golden chariot, and is welcomed by his obsequious subjects; while Pamina and Papageno, in asides, express a fear that he may resent their efforts to escape. Still, the princess assures the timid Papageno that she has always found the priest a noble-hearted man, admonishing him, whatever befalls to tell the truth, and never to seek to save himself by so cowardly a proceeding as telling a falsehood.

A grand chorus accompanies the entrance of Sarastro, extolling him as the servant of Isis and the high priest of wisdom and knowledge. As it concludes, he majestically descends from his chariot, and, kneeling before him, Pamina confesses her attempt to escape, and humbly begs his pardon. Raising her gently, Sarastro tells her that he can read in her heart, and that

as she has been impelled by love alone, he feels no resentment. He declares, however, that this is the best place for her, because he wishes her to remain pure and good, and that he will never consent to let her return to her mother, who is wholly devoted to evil. Pamina learns thus for the first time that her mother is wicked, and for a moment questions what her real duty may be. While she hesitates, Sarastro promises that if she will only follow his guidance, she will avoid all the perils that threaten her, and besides, win a husband who will have undergone severe tests to make sure he is worthy of her.

Stepping forward, the Moor now announces that a prisoner has just been secured in the neighboring forest. This captive is Tamino, who no sooner becomes aware of the princess's presence, than he rushes forward to embrace her. Such is the effect of his magic flute, that the princess recognizes in him the lover of her dreams, and therefore returns his caresses with equal ardor. The sight of their love,—which merely rouses the curiosity of the chorus,—exasperates Monostatos, who, after bidding his slaves tear the lovers asunder, falls at Sarastro's feet, imploring him to punish Tamino and Papageno for trying to carry off the princess. Noth-

ing is ever hid from the high priest of virtue; Sarastro can read his servant's thoughts, and after mockingly complimenting him on his fidelity, he sternly sentences him to receive seventy-seven stripes.

The priests dislike the Moor, and hail this decree with a burst of approval, while Sarastro gives orders to lead the prince and Papageno into their sacred enclosure, where, after covering their heads with a veil, they are to be detained until they have undergone the usual probation. While the priests execute this mandate, Sarastro mounts into his chariot with Pamina, and leaves the stage, escorted by a fine chorus, calling heavenly blessings down on his head, and proclaiming that virtue alone makes heaven on earth.

The second act opens by night, in a sacred grove in the heart of the forest. The roll of thunder is heard at the distance, as Sarastro marches upon the scene with a chorus of priests, again heralded by the strain which always betokens his approach. This march ended, Sarastro addresses the servants of the gods, announcing that a meeting has been called to decide whether Tamino is worthy of being admitted into the sanctuary of light. As he concludes his speech, the herald calls upon

the priests, who, joining Sarastro, sing an invocatory chorus, calling upon Isis and Osiris to enlighten their votaries, help them choose aright, and strengthen them to withstand every temptation.

When the chorus marches off the stage, the herald and another priest lead Tamino and Papageno forward, removing their veils. In solemn tones, the herald demands what could induce such youths to enter the temple, and Tamino bravely replies that they were moved by love and humanity. The speaker pronounces these two worthy motives, but declares that the prince will have to suffer before he can accomplish his purpose. Ready to undergo every test, Tamino not only answers all the questions propounded, but finally pledges absolute obedience to any command he may receive.

Then, turning to Papageno, the herald inquires whether he too wishes to learn wisdom by experience. The fowler, however, has no aspirations beyond plenty to eat and drink and a pretty wife to keep him company, so the herald informs him that if he, too, will submit to a probation, he shall obtain the helpmate he is seeking. At first Papageno hesitates, but learning that the girl destined for him is young

and handsome, and that her name is Papagena, he seems greatly enticed. Still, he cannily bargains to see the damsel ere he pledges himself, a wish which the speaker promises to grant, if, meantime, he will hold his tongue.

Then, in a duet, the priests caution both young men against the snares and delusions of beauty, bidding them resist all its allurements, and not speak to any women until they have obtained permission to do so. Having finished these injunctions, they depart, leaving the stage in utter darkness.

Papageno, the coward, loudly calls for light, but Tamino urges him to remember that light and darkness both come from above, and that this may be one of the tests to which they are to be subjected. Just then, the three attendants of the Queen of the Night appear on the scene, expressing great surprise to find the prince in such a place, and warning him that the priests are trying to compass his death.

Papageno,—who always believes the last speaker,—wails aloud, but Tamino, braver and full of trust in Sarastro, bids him be silent, reminding him of their oath not to speak to women. He has to repeat this warning several times, for Papageno's doubts are further strengthened by remarks made by the ladies,

and it is only after some discussion, that Tamino finally succeeds in dragging his companion away, assuring him that as those women have come there merely to try them, it behooves them to stand the test like men. Papageno whispers to the ladies that he can but follow his leader, after all five have joined in a quintette, wherein they swear to do their duty.

Just as the ladies are about to leave the precincts,—where women have no right to appear,—the thunder rolls, the lightning flashes, and voices come from the temple, calling out that the sacred halls have been desecrated, and that the priests must arm and take their revenge. At these awful tones, the coward Papageno swoons, while the ladies and Tamino flee in opposite directions.

The next scene reveals an oriental garden, where Pamina is sleeping in the shade. The Moor, finding her here alone, draws near on tiptoe, intending to take advantage of this moment to steal a kiss. In a solo, he expresses his belief that love is just as ardent beneath a swarthy skin as in the heart of a white man, and is just bending over the princess, to execute his purpose, when the ground suddenly opens and the Queen of the Night appears, bidding him desist.

Her voice not only frightens the Moor,— who beats a hasty retreat into the thicket, from whence he watches the following scene,—but awakens Pamina, who recognizes her mother with a cry of joy. But the Queen of the Night coldly informs her daughter that if she still wishes to claim her as a parent, she must obey her commands, and hate the priest, who keeps her captive. The queen also inquires what has become of the handsome young prince sent to save her? Pamina, discovering that she is talking of Tamino, sadly informs the queen that he is entirely wrapt up in the mysteries of Isis.

Next, the Queen of Night confides to her daughter that Sarastro has received from her dying husband a glowing symbol of the sun, which gives him unlimited power, and which she is determined to recover. When Pamina asks how this can be done, the queen says that she alone can do it, by using the dagger she offers to slay the priest. This proposal horrifies the princess, but the queen vows that she is impelled by such hellish fury, that if her daughter does not obey, she will surely disown her; but on the other hand, if Pamina is tractable, she is promised a long and happy life.

The next scene shows Pamina clutching this dagger, and timidly wondering whether it is

possible for her to fulfill her mother's dreadful commands? She is still watched by Monostatos, who soon steals forward, offering to help her, and urges her to return his love, threatening to kill or denounce her, should she not yield. Pamina defies this villain, swears that she never can love any one but the prince, and the exasperated Moor, raising his dagger, is about to strike her, when Sarastro suddenly appears and bids him stay his hand. With his usual cunning the Moor now tries to excuse himself, declaring he was merely forestalling an attempt to murder his master, but Sarastro sees through this subterfuge also, and sternly bids him begone. So Monostatos goes away, vowing to join the Queen of the Night, and take his revenge by serving her, and thus defeating all his master's plans.

When the Moor has gone, Pamina falls down at the priest's feet, begging his pardon for having even for a moment harbored a thought of doing him harm. Sarastro generously forgives her, and explains that her mother is now under ground, weaving all manner of infernal plots, for which she will be punished by the remorse she will feel when the princess and Tamino are married. In a solo, the priest then describes the abode of the gods, declaring that within

their sacred bowers nothing but pity for error, with love, and peace can ever be found.

The next scene shows a hall in the great temple, where Tamino and Papageno are evidently detained. The three boys, who have served as guides to the prince, enter bearing the magic flute, the box of bells, and a table. They restore the musical instruments to their respective owners, deck the table, and invite the prince and his follower to refresh themselves. Then they tell Tamino that he has nearly reached the goal, and inform Papageno that he *must* learn to hold his tongue.

As soon as they have passed out, Tamino tries his magic flute, but Papageno, who thinks more of creature comforts, sits down to the table, where he proceeds to eat and drink with great relish.

At the first sound of the magic flute, Princess Pamina comes running into the hall, where she tries to converse with the prince and his follower, and is amazed at receiving nothing but signs in return. She vainly implores Tamino to inform her why he will neither look at her nor speak to her, and finally declares that she perceives he has ceased to love her, expressing her sorrow in a beautiful air before she departs. It has required a great effort for Tamino to keep

silent and not break his vow, but Papageno,—who has not lost one mouthful,—claims great credit for holding *his* tongue, although he acknowledges that he was obliged to put his hand over his mouth, to keep from answering the princess's appeals.

The sound of a funeral trumpet rouses Tamino, and he starts in the direction whence the call came, trying to draw Papageno after him. But the fowler, not wishing to leave the dainties before him, avers that he would stay here and eat, even should Sarastro send lions to drive him away! This boastful remark is immediately followed by a comical stampede, for a lion appears, and Papageno frantically calls for Tamino. The latter returns, and with a few notes on his magic flute puts the lion to flight. Now, although bottles and dishes are as tempting as ever, Papageno judges it more prudent to remain in his master's company, and when again summoned to follow him, marches off the scene, inquiring where they are going, notwithstanding the fact that his master has enjoined strict silence upon him.

The curtain next rises on a subterranean palace, where the priests enter, bearing on their shoulders a vividly illuminated pyramid,—the symbol of the sun. They are followed by

Sarastro and a few other priests, all of whom carry lighted torches. As they file in, they sing a solemn chorus extolling their gods, and declare that the youth they have been testing has been found so worthy of honor, that he will soon be numbered among the elect.

As the chorus closes, Tamino and Papageno are brought in, their heads still veiled. Then, Sarastro addresses the prince, telling him only two more trials await him, and hoping that virtue may direct and love inspire him to bear these successfully too. He then bids a priest bring in the princess, who enters, wondering what all this silence may mean, and wishing that she might hear a sound or perceive a sign, indicating where her lover may be, and how they may meet. Just then, Sarastro tells her her lover is here, ready to bid her a last farewell. He removes her veil, and she, perceiving Tamino, wishes to embrace him, but is checked by the announcement that he must go. When Pamina inquires whether it is true she shall never see her lover again, the priest oracularly replies that it will depend on their virtue, and the three principal characters join in a trio, wherein Tamino, in an exalted mood, is ready to welcome death, which Sarastro urges him to brave, while Pamina vows that he cannot love

her since he is ready to risk never seeing her again. After a heartrending farewell the lovers part Sarastro, Tamino and priests going off in one direction, while Pamina vanishes in the other.

Once more the curtain rises on an outdoor scene, where Papageno runs aimlessly along a path, evidently seeking his master. Instead, he suddenly encounters the Herald, from whom he inquires which way the prince has gone. He is asked how he came to lose sight of Tamino, and warned, that although he may have shared some of the prince's dangers, he may never expect to share his bliss, for he is too weak and ready to yield to temptation. The only bliss that Papageno has ever coveted, however, is plenty to eat and drink, and when he naively expresses these material desires to the Herald, the latter points to a table, where he can feast at his ease.

Once more the fowler revels in plenty, and again declares that the only thing lacking is some merry female companion, who would enjoy eating and drinking as much as he. He concludes with a solo, in which he invokes the appearance of some fair creature. Just as he finishes singing, an old woman appears, who, with mincing manners and affected gestures,

offers him her love. She is so far from attractive, that Papageno tries to avoid her, but when she declares he must either marry her at once, or live on bread and water, he promptly declares that he will be her loving spouse. He has no sooner taken this oath, and given her his hand upon it, than the old woman is transformed into a fascinating creature,—his exact counterpart,—clad in feathers, who introduces herself as Papagena. But, when the fowler is about to embrace this fair helpmate, the earth opens to receive him, and the curtain falls.

The next scene shows a garden, wherein the three boys are disporting, singing that clouds will soon vanish, the time of trial be over, and that they will be able to enjoy complete peace. They go away on one side as Pamina appears on the other. She seems distraught, and is clasping a dagger to her bosom, declaring wildly that she is about to commit suicide, a resolution which the three boys, hidden in the verdure, combat with every argument in their power. Still, the princess vows that having nothing to live for, she prefers to direct upon herself the dagger which her mother gave her, rather than kill her guardian.

When she tries to stab herself, the boys check her by asking what the prince would say could

he behold his beloved thus? At this mention of the prince, Pamina wails that he has ceased to care for her, a fact which the boys stoutly deny, swearing that the prince is faithful, and that they will lead her straight to him, and show her what dangers he is braving in hope of winning her for his bride.

A scenic transformation now reveals a tremendous mountain, with a cave, behind whose grated entrance appear lurid flames. These rise to the very top of the mountain, down whose slopes, molten streams of lava are flowing. Near this portal, on either side of a pyramid bearing an inscription, stand two men in black armor. They solemnly read the inscription to Prince Tamino, who has come hither to undergo his last test, that of purification by air, water and fire. The warriors tell him that in order to do so, he must brave the terrors of death in triple forms, but that if he succeeds, the golden gates of light will fly open, and he will be initiated in all the mysteries of their religion.

In spite of all these warnings, Tamino persists in his desire to continue his journey. He has just prevailed upon the guards to open the gate, and they are solemnly committing him to the higher powers, when Pamina rushes forward. This time,—as no injunction of silence

seals his lips,—Tamino eloquently expresses his joy at again beholding his beloved. A moment later, however, both lovers become conscious of the perils which surround them, and Pamina, in her devotion for the prince, says she is ready to brave them all by his side. She sings that her love will be his safeguard, and that the magic flute will protect them both. The four actors now express a fervent belief that those who know how to die are sure to conquer, and as the lovers pass on, the iron gates close forever behind them. For a few moments the eerie sound of the magic flute is heard, and Tamino is seen moving bravely forward, closely followed by the princess, the flames all dying away at their approach.

The fire test is thus safely passed, but the roar of waters in the lovers' ears, warns them of another danger. A sudden shifting of scenery reveals a torrent, through which both wade, the waters rising higher and higher, and finally sweeping them out of sight, although Tamino sounds his flute to the very last.

It seems as though the lovers have perished, when the mountain opening suddenly reveals a temple, where the prince and his beloved offer solemn thanks, for they have withstood the tests of water and air as well as of fire. They

conclude their thanksgiving hymn, the temple gates open wide, and from within a priestly chorus chants that virtue is to receive its reward and a noble pair to celebrate their triumph.

Once more, the scene changes back to the garden where Papageno met his affinity. He has returned thither, alone, to search for his beloved, and realizes, but too late, that his chattering tongue has been the cause of all his sorrows. After some vain lamentations, he prepares to hang himself, but just then the three boys appear, and admonish him not to be rash, assuring him that the dead never return. When the fowler wails that he has no desire to live, since Papagena is lost, they remind him of his magic bells.

With a sudden bound from the depths of despair, to the height of joy, Papageno rings the bells, calling loudly for Papagena, who comes dancing on the scene. Her appearance is the signal for a pantomimic performance of ludicrous description, and when it is over, the lovers join in a merry duet, wherein they sketch a future of material joys,—the only ones not beyond their powers of comprehension.

When the curtain rises for the last time, we behold the Queen of the Night, with Monostatos and her three followers, making final ar-

rangements to force her way into the temple of virtue and light. There she intends to surprise and overcome Sarastro, and recover the princess, whose hand is to be given to the Moor in reward for his services. Amid the roll of thunder, the flashing of lightning, and the roar of a tempest, the scene changes to the interior of the temple where Sarastro sits enthroned. Light, knowledge and virtue, have prevailed over darkness, ignorance and crime, and as the Queen of Night and her attendants appear, they suddenly sink, in sheer shame, to their appointed places in the infernal regions. Then Sarastro solemnly proclaims the undisputed reign of light and virtue to the prince and princess, who,—in the garb of the Initiated,—stand in the ranks of the priests.

They now receive a solemn welcome and blessing, and the whole chorus unites in inviting them to enjoy the bliss which awaits those who have been tried and not found wanting.

RIGOLETTO

VERDI'S opera, Rigoletto, is based on the fine tragedy of Victor Hugo, "Le roi s'amuse." The libretto was arranged by Piava and the work produced for the first time in Venice, in 1851. The rising curtain reveals the reception rooms of the Duke of Mantua, where music is heard, and a throng of richly dressed people move to and fro. The duke enters the first room, which is nearly empty, and confides to his companion that he is deeply enamored with a young lady, whom he has frequently seen in church during the past three months. In answer to the courtier's questions, the duke describes the quiet house where his lady-love dwells alone with a duenna, but where she is visited at night by a man, who may be her lover.

Their conversation is interrupted by the entrance of a group of ladies and cavaliers, and when Borsa (the duke's companion) admires one of them, the duke loudly declares that the wife of Ceprano surpasses all others in beauty. When the courtier ventures to suggest that he

had better not proclaim his admiration so openly lest it should cause scandal, the duke,—who is a well known libertine,—sings a gay song, declaring that he has flirted with women of all kinds, but that while he has caused many a timid heart to beat, he, himself, has never felt more than a passing fancy for any of his fair victims.

As the duke concludes, Ceprano passes through the room, followed by his wife and her escorts. Approaching her with elaborate courtesy, the duke inquires why she leaves so soon, and when she declares that she is merely obeying a husband's wishes, kisses her hand, vows he thinks of her alone, and offers his arm to lead her back to the scene of festivity.

Rigoletto, the duke's jester,—a hunchback whose caustic speeches are the dread of all,—sarcastically comments upon Ceprano's expression, when, after a moment's hesitation, he follows the duke and his disobedient spouse. The spectators, too, are evidently amused, and when Borsa suggests that the duke is merely diverting himself in his usual fashion, Rigoletto declares that his master's life is a perpetual round of gambling, gallantry and pleasure, and that he is now playing court to Ceprano's wife mainly for the fun of rousing the husband's jealousy.

Rigoletto has hardly finished this statement and gone away, when Marullo enters, exclaiming that there is news, which the courtiers clamor to hear. In the midst of quite an uproar, he informs them that Rigoletto—to whom they all owe a grudge for poking fun at them in public—has a lady-love! All are still exclaiming when the duke returns, closely followed by Rigoletto, to whom he pointedly remarks that Ceprano—who is in the background—is a very troublesome fellow, but that his wife is an angel. The jester, who has long been his master's tool, and to whom nothing seems sacred, coolly suggests that the duke should kidnap the countess, and if her husband offers any objection, imprison, exile or even behead him!

At this impudent suggestion, the count steps forward, to threaten the fool, whom the duke defends, declaring that men of his stamp are always allowed great license. Nevertheless, he cautions Rigoletto not to go too far, lest he incur the vengeance of some of his courtiers. But the hunchback carelessly expresses his intimate conviction that no one will dare harm the duke's buffoon, a boast which encourages the courtiers and Ceprano to carry out a long cherished plan to punish him. In a quick aside, Ceprano therefore makes an ap-

pointment with the courtiers for the following night, when masked and armed, they will take their revenge.

A chorus has barely finished extolling the delights of the present festal occasion, when Count Monterone forces his way into the room, declaring he will be heard. Although the duke tries to silence him, Monterone solemnly declares that even were all the rest of the world mute, his voice would be raised to denounce such crimes as the duke perpetrates.

Hoping to create a diversion, Rigoletto mimics the count's tragic entrance and speech, only to be viewed with withering scorn by the poor man, who accuses the Duke of seducing his daughter. He goes on to add that as long as he lives, he will never cease to reproach him for dishonoring his family, and that even when dead, his spirit will return to haunt and rebuke him.

The duke—unable to silence him—finally bids his attendants arrest the count, who, as he is led away, solemnly lays a father's curse, not only upon the duke, but upon the fool who so shamelessly aids and abets him.

This curse, which does not greatly affect the duke, fills Rigoletto's heart with superstitious dread, for his dearest possession is an only

daughter, whose existence no one suspects. The first act closes with a general denunciation of Monterone by the chorus, who chide him as trouble-feast when he is led away by the halbardiers.

The curtain, rising for the second act, reveals the end of a street, where a modest house, with garden wall and terrace, adjoins the palace of Count Ceprano. The street is deserted, but Rigoletto, closely wrapped in his cloak, and still haunted by the awful curse he has heard, soon becomes aware that he is followed. Taking the man for a beggar, the fool curtly informs him he has nothing to give him, whereupon Sparafucile replies that he is a bravo, and that for a mere trifle he is ready to remove any enemy from his path. In answer to Rigoletto's questions, he describes his methods—how he picks a quarrel and slays his man in a street brawl, or decoys him to his dwelling, where, his sister helping him, they soon dispose of a victim. His brief words and graphic gestures leave no doubt as to his meaning and methods, and after patiently listening to all he has to say, and taking note of his address and terms, Rigoletto dismisses him, promising to have recourse to him should he ever need his services.

The bravo gone, Rigoletto bitterly comments

on the similarity of their trades, for while *he* wounds with his tongue, the bravo uses his sword. Still, even this encounter cannot long divert his mind from his cruel position as butt and tool for his master and court, from the difformity which is unspeakably humiliating to him, and especially from the curse which still rings in his ears.

When he reaches the garden door, he draws a key from his pocket, and entering the yard, is rapturously greeted by his daughter Gilda, whom he adores. They embrace, but after telling his daughter that she is his earthly treasure, the poor hunchback utters such a sigh, that Gilda implores him to confide in her and reveal the secret of their family and name, both of which are still unknown to her. Rigoletto assures her she has no family, and forestalls further questions by a sudden inquiry whether she ever ventures out of the house. Gilda replies that for three months past she has gone only to church, and pleads—since he will not talk of himself—to be told something about her sainted mother.

In a touching aria Rigoletto implores her not to speak of one, whom he lost too soon, a creature of angelic beauty and virtue, who loved him through pity, and, who, thank God,

left a daughter to comfort him in his old age. His sorrow for that adored wife, touches Gilda deeply, but when she again implores him to tell her who and what he is, he merely states that while some fear, others envy him, and unconsciously adds that one man has actually cursed him! He assures her that she is his family, his country, his all; but, when she begs permission to view the city which she has not yet seen, although she has been three months with him, he refuses to let her leave the house.

Gilda cannot understand this caution or severity, but, in an aside, Rigoletto explains that should she be seen, she might be stolen from him, for many would consider it a good joke to dishonor the daughter of a poor buffoon. The mere thought of such a catastrophe makes him summon the duenna, Giovanna, whom he questions closely, inquiring whether any one has been seen prowling about the premises, noting his coming or going, and whether she is always careful to keep the gate locked. Her answers to these questions being quite satisfactory, he adjures her to watch over his tender blossom, standing between her and the evil world, of which she must remain wholly ignorant, so that her purity may never be tarnished. Gilda soon joins in his song, declaring however that she is

best guarded by the spirit of her sainted mother in heaven.

The duet between father and daughter finished, Rigoletto, hearing steps without, hastily opens the garden door. While he is investigating, the duke, disguised as a common citizen, slips behind him into the court, and hiding behind a tree throws a purse of gold to Giovanna to insure her silence. Neither Rigoletto nor Gilda have noticed the stranger's entrance ; but the girl is somewhat annoyed by her father's suspicions, especially, when he renews his inquiries whether she has ever been followed on her way to or from church.

Peering out from behind the tree-trunk, the duke, in utter amazement, recognizes Rigoletto, who, meantime, turns to Giovanna, and bids her refuse to open, never mind who knocks. When the duenna artfully asks whether these orders are to hold good should the duke demand admittance, Rigoletto hotly replies he least of all is ever to be received ! Then, having taken a tender leave of his daughter, the fool departs, carefully closing the door behind him.

When he is gone, Gilda is overcome with remorse because she has not told him of a certain youth in church, with whom she has never ex-

changed a word, but whom she confesses that she greatly admires. She adds that were he only a poor student, and not the rich lord he seems, she might even venture to love him. At these words, the duke emerges from his hiding-place, and after signalling to the duenna, who discreetly vanishes, kneels before the surprised Gilda, imploring her to repeat the words which have just charmed his ear.

Frightened and embarrassed, Gilda looks around for Giovanna, whom she calls in vain. But when she would flee, the duke detains her, using all his arts to charm her, and paying no heed to her repeated injunctions to leave her. He declares the moment too propitious to be neglected, and passionately sings that love is the sun of the soul. His wooing charms the unsophisticated girl, who not only believes every word he utters, but fails to hear voices without, pointing out her house as the place where a forced entrance is to be effected. In answer to Gilda's timid request, the duke has just informed her that he is Walter Maldé, a poor student, when the sound of steps and voices so alarms the poor girl, that she summons Giovanna, bidding her pilot the gentleman safely out of their garden. After a brief parting duet, wherein the lovers pledge their troth, the duke vanishes with

the duenna, leaving Gilda to muse over his beloved name, which she vows is graved forever deep in her heart.

She has barely vanished into the house, when the conspirators against Rigoletto's peace appear in the street, masked, armed, and bearing a ladder. They catch a glimpse of the maiden as she retires, exchange rapid comments on her beauty, which is "fairy-like" or "angelic," according to the speaker, and wonder that such an exquisite creature should be the mistress of a hunchback. They are all joking over the matter, when the jester suddenly comes back, disturbed by the sound of laughter, and troubled by that haunting curse. In the darkness, Rigoletto is not at first aware of the presence of the maskers, who, having time to recognize him, caution one another, before he challenges them. Marullo, spokesman for the band, jauntily explains that they are there to kidnap Ceprano's wife. When Rigoletto seems to doubt his words, or his ability to enter the palace, he whispers to Ceprano to hand over his keys, which he lets Rigoletto feel. Touch convinces the jester that a count's crest surmounts the key. In his relief, and anxiety to preserve the neighboring house from their raids, the jester unwittingly steps into the trap which

his enemies have laid, and consents not only to don the mask they offer, but even to hold the ladder for them.

The unfeeling wretches mask the poor fool, taking care to draw a bandage well over his eyes and ears, so he can neither see nor hear. Then, in chorus, they gloat over the trick they are playing, wondering what kind of a figure he will cut on the morrow, when he discovers that he has helped kidnap his own mistress! Rapidly scaling the ladder he holds, they then enter the house and garden, and soon reappear, bearing the struggling Gilda, who faintly calls for help. As they carry her off, her scarf falls near the place where the unsuspecting Rigoletto is still clinging to the ladder.

It is only when the conspirators have vanished in the distance with their victim, that the fool discovers that the pitch darkness is due to a bandage over his eyes. Quickly removing the mask, he recognizes his own house, perceives the open door, the rifled chamber, the scarf at his feet, and, after a few moments of wordless agony, ejaculates that the curse has indeed alighted upon him, and swoons.

The second act opens in the Ducal palace also, but this time it is a vast antechamber, leading to the private apartments of the duke

which we behold. The duke enters in a state of great perturbation. He has just become aware of the fact that the maiden he wooed,—and whose purity charmed him,—has been kidnapped, but as yet, he does not know by whom, or where she can be found. In a solo, he pictures her tears and distress, and her frantic calls for her lover to rescue her. He swears that every tear she sheds shall be dearly paid for, vowing *he* could not bear to cause her even the slightest pang.

He is musing thus, when the conspirators come crowding in, full of their recent adventure, and eager to relate to the Duke the trick they have played upon Rigoletto. After a brief broken recitative, they intone a descriptive chorus of the whole affair, concluding with the statement that the lady is now safe in the palace. The duke,—alone aware of the fact that the ravished fair is Rigoletto's daughter, not his mistress—is enraptured at the thought that she is so near him. In fact, he shows such a sudden and marvellous change of mood, that even the courtiers are surprised, when, after a brief solo in praise of love's power, he suddenly leaves them, intending to present himself immediately before Gilda.

The duke has scarcely gone, when Rigoletto

comes upon the scene, pale and distraught, gazing suspiciously around him at the courtiers, whom he suspects of having had a share in the kidnapping, and whose mocking greetings he either overlooks, or answers in a surly manner. His one longing is to find some clew to his daughter's hiding-place, so he eagerly picks up and examines a stray handkerchief, dropping it again with the whispered comment that it is not hers.

A page enters with a message from the duchess,—who wishes to speak to her husband,—but the courtiers mockingly inform the youth that the duke is closely engaged, their insinuating tones and gestures lending point to their remarks. Rigoletto, who has been watching them from a distance, now suddenly rushes into their midst, demanding whether his daughter is with the duke, and when they try to put him off with ambiguous answers, he makes a frantic attempt to force open the door of the duke's apartment.

After vainly raging against the courtiers who oppose him, and cursing them with great fury, the poor father, exhausted by his fruitless effort to reach and rescue his daughter, melts into tears. A passing gleam of compassion on Marullo's face, causes Rigoletto to plead with

him for the restoration of his beloved child and it is while he is still making this touching appeal, that the door suddenly opens, and a dishevelled and frightened girl rushes out and falls into his arms.

Rigoletto proudly tells the assembled courtiers that this is his beloved child, and that now she is restored to him, his tears are changed to laughter. But, as Gilda sobs on, he suddenly asks why she is weeping, and catches a stammered confession that she has been ill-treated, and has that to reveal which no other ears save his may hear. With all the dignity of an outraged father, the hunchback now orders the courtiers out of the room, his tones and gestures inspiring the nobles with such awe, that they reluctantly obey, declaring fools and children must be humored. Still, they are determined to watch from a distance, so to ascertain what will happen next.

When they have gone, and the door has ostentatiously closed behind them, Rigoletto seats himself, and bids his daughter speak. In faltering tones Gilda describes meeting a youth at church, his sudden apparition in their garden, and her kidnapping and transfer to the ducal palace. Rigoletto can bear no more, and with touching delicacy spares her further explana-

tion, assuming all the blame, for he now realizes that he has grievously sinned in serving the licentious duke.

His tenderness touches his child, and when he assures her that they will leave this place forever, she eagerly assents. They are still talking, when guards file through the hall, escorting Monterone to prison. For a moment, the count pauses before the duke's portrait, muttering that the man he cursed must be protected by magic, since no thunder-bolt has as yet fallen upon him. No sooner has he gone, than Rigoletto springs to his feet, vowing that he will be the instrument of revenge, words not clearly understood by Gilda, who, after wondering vaguely at the fierce joy flashing in his eyes, breaks off to wail over her lost illusions.

In the third act, the rising curtain reveals a dilapidated house near the river, which can only dimly be perceived, for it is night. Gilda and Rigoletto come upon the scene, the father expostulating because his daughter cannot forget the wretch who has betrayed her. When Gilda timidly objects that it is impossible to banish the thought of his great love, Rigoletto offers to prove the duke faithless, provided she will cease to care for him.

Gilda yielding a reluctant assent to this proposal, Rigoletto leads her to a crevice in the wall, bidding her use it as a peep-hole to observe all that is going on in that house. After a moment's contemplation of the bravo Sparafucile,—who is cleaning his belt,—Gilda sees the door open to admit the duke, disguised as a private soldier. While Gilda at her peep-hole, softly exclaims in surprise at recognizing her lover, the latter,—evidently an old customer,—clamors for a room and some wine.

While Sparafucile goes in quest of the drink, the duke sings a gay air, in which he describes all women as fickle, yet indispensable to mankind. Sparafucile seizes this chance to exchange a few words with Rigoletto, inquiring whether the waiting guest is the man he designated, and whether he wishes his death? Rigoletto bids the bravo wait. Meantime Maddelene, Sparafucile's sister, has obeyed his signal, and joined the duke, who, without any loss of time, begins making love to her, swearing he has thought and dreamed of her only, ever since he first beheld her. Maddelene, accustomed to deal with her brother's customers, piques the duke's vanity by refusing to submit to his caresses, and by accusing him of being a prey to intoxication, while he, eager

in proportion as she appears cold, presses her to accept his attentions, and even proposes marriage.

Every word, every gesture, are overheard or seen by the eavesdropping Gilda, of whom Rigoletto softly inquires whether she is at last convinced of the truth of his statements. But Gilda lingers there as if fascinated, sadly ejaculating that it was in those self-same words that he had wooed her, and that it is strange her heart should not break, after all the anguish it has endured! Rigoletto assures her that such a man is not worth a single regret, and that her wrongs will all be avenged. Then he urges her to hasten home, don male attire, secure a horse and their valuables, and join him here at midnight, so they can effect their escape to Verona together.

After vainly trying to induce Rigoletto to go with her, Gilda leaves him there. As soon as she is out of sight, Rigoletto summons the bravo, with whom he discusses the execution of his vengeance, while the duke and Madeline continue their violent flirtation. Rigoletto pays half of the promised sum for the murder of the duke, whose corpse the bravo is to deliver to him, at midnight, duly sewn in a bag; for the fool, determined not to be cheated, has

decided to dispose of his victim's corpse himself.

As they finish their arrangements and part, the thunder begins to roll. Sparafucile's entrance into the room and announcement that a storm is brewing, puts an end to the duke's wooing, and causes him to ask for a chamber where he may spend the night. The bravo, therefore, conducts him to an upper chamber, where he leaves him, wishing him pleasant dreams, and the girl, watching them out of sight, remarks regretfully that it is a great pity so gracious a youth should be doomed to so sudden an end.

While the Duke prepares for rest, the brother and sister have a brief colloquy, in which the bravo exhibits the money he has already received, explaining that he must consummate the crime ere he can collect the remainder. Maddelene, after abstracting the Duke's sword from his chamber, returns to her brother, and induces him to promise that, should a stranger ask shelter before midnight, he will murder that person instead of the Duke, sewing up the corpse in the sack which he has given her to mend.

It is just as the bravo's sister reappears with the Duke's sword, that Gilda, disguised as a

youth, returns and softly draws near the peephole to discover whether her lover is still flirting with the pretty gypsy. While there, she sees the brother and sister, overhears their conversation and agreement, and unselfishly makes up her mind to die for the man, whom, in spite of all, she still loves.

The clock strikes. Gilda, perceiving she must act at once, timidly knocks, and in answer to questions from within, describes herself as a strange youth seeking shelter. While the bravo prepares to admit her, she breathes a last prayer, imploring divine forgiveness not only for herself, but for those who are about to murder her, and when the door opens, steps in timidly, only to be slain on the threshold, although not in sight of the spectators.

Silence and darkness reign on the stage when Rigoletto again appears, rejoicing over the fact that the vengeance, for which he has been thirsting during the past thirty days, is now near at hand. He watches the closed door, while awaiting the midnight hour, which is slowly tolled by the town-clock. With the last stroke, Sparafucile peers out into the darkness ; then, having ascertained that his patron is waiting, drags out a heavy sack and delivers it to him, abruptly declaring his work is done, and

claiming the rest of his salary. Having pocketed the purse, he volunteers his assistance to throw the bag into the river, but Rigoletto declines all aid, and, having dismissed the bravo, gloats over his victim. He, a mere buffoon, is now trampling under foot one of earth's potentates, having overcome him solely by mother-wit.

He is dragging the sack towards the river, when, in the distance, the Duke's voice is heard trolling a merry song. At first, Rigoletto will not believe he has heard aright, then, bending over the sack, he rips it open. The next flash of lightning reveals to him the pale features of his daughter. Still incredulous, he gazes upon her, and touches her. He is about to summon help from the house, when Gilda recovers consciousness for a moment. Beside himself with joy, Rigoletto embraces her, and when she wonderingly calls him by name, eagerly inquires where and how she was wounded?

In broken accents Gilda confesses that she has given her own life to save the man whom she will love as long as she can draw breath. Rigoletto, heart-broken, realizes that his vengeance has recoiled upon his own head, and implores his daughter to look at him and speak to him once more.

Gilda faintly informs him that she cannot speak any more, save to implore his forgiveness for the Duke, and his blessing. The opera closes with a duet of pathetic beauty, wherein Gilda tells her father that she will pray for him up in heaven, where she hopes to join her sainted mother, while Rigoletto passionately implores her to remain with him, and not leave him desolate.

At the close of this duet Gilda dies, and the poor buffoon falls senseless across his daughter's lifeless body.

OTHELLO

SHAKESPEARE'S tragedy has furnished librettos for two composers, Rossini and Verdi. The latter musician first produced his opera in Milan, in 1887, where both the music, and the libretto by Boito, met with great applause.

The curtain rises on the seaport at Cyprus, where the people have assembled and are eagerly gazing out at sea. As soon as a sail becomes visible, they hail it with loud shouts of joy. Montano, governor of the island, is among the spectators, and is first to descry the ensign, which a flash of lightning plainly reveals. The roll of thunder is scarcely louder than the port guns saluting the incoming vessel, which one of the officers, Cassio, recognizes as that of the General, Othello, coming from Venice to take command of island and forces, and to wage war against the Turks. The excitement of the spectators increases rapidly, and the chorus they sing describes the wild thunder-storm, the tossing sea, and the peril of the approaching vessel. These spectators are joined

by more, attracted by the boom of the cannon, and they chime in a fervent prayer for the safety of the ship and crew.

Iago,—another officer,—exclaims that the mainsail has just given way, while Roderigo, standing beside him, cries that the ship is driving on the rocks! While all are running hither and thither, calling for help, Iago, in an aside, expresses a grim hope that the waves may engulf the coming general.

His evil wishes have hardly been voiced, when the chorus,—in a sudden revulsion of feeling,—joyfully proclaim that all are safe. Cypriots and soldiers hurry down to the strand and man the boats, and one can hear curt orders delivered on board of the vessel coming to anchor. A brief exchange of greetings down on the quay,—out of sight,—is speedily followed by the appearance of Othello, coming up the stairs, followed by sailors, soldiers and spectators. As he reaches the topmost step, he proclaims that the war is over, for on the way hither he has met and defeated the Turks. He adds that the few vessels left them were too badly damaged to weather this storm, and that henceforth no one need feel further apprehensions.

Othello, the governor, and officers, now move

off towards the castle, while the crowd cheer, and in joyful chorus proclaim their satisfaction over the news they have just heard. Then Iago asks Roderigo what he expects to do next, and when the young officer moodily talks of drowning, angrily retorts that it is foolish to commit suicide merely because the woman one loves is the wife of another! Roderigo, however, vows he cannot conquer this passion, so,—while the crowd prepare materials for a grand bonfire,—Iago bids him bide his time, predicting that the lady he loves,—the fair Desdemona,—will soon weary of her swarthy husband, Othello, the Moor, and will then be ready to listen favorably to his wooing.

Then, seeing Cassio draw near a group of soldiers and converse with them, Iago points him out to Roderigo, revealing the fact that Othello has roused his vindictive anger by promoting this officer over his head. He continues his aside with Roderigo, while the bonfire is lighted and the people dance around it, singing a chorus in praise of the bright flames, which they compare to love, in turn ardent, aspiring, lowering or flickering, as the case may be. The chorus over, the crowd disperses in the wine-shops, and when the fire has entirely died down, one can perceive that the storm is all over.

Iago and Roderigo now join Cassio, whom they invite to drink with them. Although he declines, Iago presses him, until Cassio confesses that he is already befuddled and dares not drink any more. Paying no heed to this speech, Iago offers a toast to Othello and Desdemona, whose wedding feast they are celebrating as well as the victory. All respond save Roderigo; and Cassio, whose tongue is loosened by the wine he has just quaffed, loudly proclaims Desdemona the fairest flower of the island.

With fiendish intent, Iago calls Roderigo's attention to this speech and the following, wherein Cassio vows her charms are so great that all hearts surrender to her at first sight, but Roderigo contributes his meed of praise by declaring she is as modest as beautiful. Still, when Cassio bids Iago add his tribute, the latter avers he is nothing if not critical. As Cassio hotly retorts that Desdemona's beauty is beyond criticism, Iago cunningly bids Roderigo mark that this young man is evidently smitten, and that the general's wife may yet learn to love him. Having thus artfully kindled jealousy of Othello and of Cassio Iago slyly bids Roderigo rid himself of one rival, at least, by causing him to drink until he disgraces himself, and thus forfeits his position. Calling loudly

for more wine, Iago then fills his own, and his companions' glasses, and when the crowd has been duly provided with drinks, pledges the lieutenant in a rollicking drinking song, whose refrain is taken up by Roderigo and the chorus with great gusto.

Although apparently oblivious to all but the wine, Iago, in an aside, calls Roderigo's attention to Cassio's increasing intoxication, and then helps it on by again challenging him to drink, an invitation the lieutenant no longer has the sense to refuse, and which the crowd also accepts with a jolly refrain.

As Cassio, although no longer himself, is still able to maintain a certain dignity, Iago whispers to Roderigo that it will take another bumper to make him really drunk, and then offers a new pledge to the crowd. His song, this time, is interrupted by Cassio's swaggering statement that *he* is not afraid to drink, an announcement which amuses the citizens, who are also entertained by his vain efforts to talk and walk straight.

Meantime, Iago intimates to Roderigo that this rival is in the right mood to accept any challenge, and that if he only begins fighting, they can sound an alarm, which will summon Othello out on the square, and thus prevent his

enjoying any private conversation with his newly-wedded wife.

The plan so cleverly laid by the villain Iago, appeals to Roderigo, who has barely subscribed to it, when Montano comes out, and addressing Cassio, bids him keep watch on the rampart, his post for the night. When Cassio staggers away, the governor expresses surprise at his condition, but Iago jauntily declares that the lieutenant is seldom sober, a statement which Montano intends to repeat to Othello. In his devious way across the square, Cassio loudly summons the people to follow him, an invitation which Roderigo receives with intentionally mocking laughter, soon echoed by all around. Sufficiently drunk to be quarrelsome, Cassio demands who is making fun of him, and when Roderigo declares one can but laugh at a drunkard, draws his sword and falls upon him. Roderigo defends himself, and while fighting they exchange sundry uncomplimentary remarks. Before they have time to finish their duel, Montano interferes, but while Roderigo,—being sober,—immediately yields to the voice of authority, Cassio is too drunk to discriminate, and actually attacks his superior, to the horror of the crowd. In a hasty aside, Iago now bids Roderigo take advantage of the confusion to

give the alarm, while he pretends to separate the combatants.

While Roderigo runs off the scene, Iago, turning to the two antagonists, vainly implores them to desist. Men and women run hither and thither, exclaiming loudly, until Iago, noting that Montano's blood is flowing, bids them sound the alarm. A moment later bells are heard pealing, and when the chorus proclaim that help is coming, Othello appears on the scene, escorted by torch-bearers. He imperiously demands what all this commotion means? At his words, the fighting ceases, the crowd melts away, and Othello, seeing Iago near him, bids him relate what has just occurred. Iago professes complete ignorance of the causes which stirred up a quarrel among people, a moment before on friendly terms. Because "Honest Iago" can give him no information, Othello turns first to Cassio,—who can only stammer a few words of excuse,—and then to Montano, who faintly answers that he is sorely wounded. This news is most unwelcome to Othello, who is openly wondering what can have caused the disturbance, when he perceives that Desdemona has been alarmed by the noise, and is coming in search of him. Running to meet her, he soothes her terrors; then, turning to Cassio,—

whose violence has been the occasion of her alarm,—deprives him of his office in a few stern words.

Picking up the sword which falls from Cassio's nerveless hand, and, handing it over to one of the soldiers, Iago proclaims in an aside that he has scored! Then, in obedience to Othello's order to reassure the alarmed inhabitants, he leaves the stage, while Othello provides for Montano's comfort, and orders his escort back into the castle, declaring he will personally mount guard on this square the remainder of the night, to prevent any renewal of the disturbance.

During the next scene, only Othello and Desdemona are present on the esplanade, where the stars soon appear in the clear sky. Othello softly sings of the subsiding clamor, and of the peace, which, stealing over the scene, again permits him to revel in a love, which Desdemona assures him is fully returned, describing the anxiety she recently endured, knowing him exposed to all the dangers of war and of a tempest at sea.

The couple also remember the days of their courtship, when Othello spoke of sieges, battles and hairbreadth escapes. But Desdemona recalls most clearly his sufferings, when sold into slavery. The mere description of them once

wrung from her tears, which, Othello declares, afforded him the first glimpse into the paradise he now enjoys. In a duet Desdemona confesses that these tales first won her heart, which statement Othello confirms by adding : " You loved me for the dangers I had passed, and I loved you, that you did pity them."

The married lovers are so blissfully happy, that Othello declares himself absolutely content with the present, although Desdemona assures him that a pleasant future awaits them, for their love will only increase, if heaven vouchsafes to answer her fervent prayers. Touched by her words, Othello assures her that even angels must say amen to such a petition, words which Desdemona happily echoes.

Then, going to the parapet and gazing down into the sea, Othello confesses that the joy he feels is almost too great, ere he turns to claim kiss after kiss from his blushing bride, who offers only a faint protest. Many signs soon point to the approaching dawn and the end of their vigil, so, after ascertaining that all is quiet, that the Pleiades are sinking beyond the horizon, and that Venus, the morning star is in the ascendant, they return home, clinging lovingly to one another.

The second act opens in the interior of the castle, and shows an apartment on the ground floor, opening out on a veranda and gardens beyond. When the curtain rises, Iago and Cassio are conversing together. Evidently sober and repentant, the lieutenant stands there in great dejection, while Iago assures him that if he will only submit to his guidance, he can soon recover his master's favor, and former position, and prove as fascinating as ever to Mistress Bianca, his *inamorata*. As he seems incredulous, Iago informs him that he need but secure the aid of Desdemona, whose influence is now all powerful with the general. Inclined to adopt the course Iago points out, Cassio inquires how he can see his chief's wife, and is directed to the garden, where she is in the habit of spending the noonday hours.

Left alone, Iago indulges in a soliloquy, wherein he recognizes his own tendencies to wrong-doing, saying that he is base and false by nature, and was evidently fashioned from some evil germ. Then, seeing Desdemona and Emilia in the garden, he urges Cassio,—who is still within sight,—to proffer his suit. When he sees him accost Desdemona in a confidential manner, he exclaims that the right moment has come to summon Othello, and instil the poison

which is to work their ruin. At this very moment, he sees the general coming ; but, pretending not to notice him, gazes fixedly at Cassio and Desdemona, muttering,—as soon as his master is sufficiently near to overhear,—that he does not like what he sees.

When Othello asks in amazed tones what he may mean, Iago, in feigned confusion, seeks to excuse himself. Othello then inquires whether it was Cassio who just then took leave of his wife, but Iago reproachfully exclaims, that surely Cassio would not act in such a consciously guilty manner ! However, Othello insists that he was not mistaken, although Iago again denies that it was Cassio, and sinks into a reverie, from which his master rouses him by inquiring the subject of his thoughts.

After a perfunctory “nothing,” Iago suddenly asks whether Cassio was privy to their wooing, and hearing that he often acted as messenger, drops a few meaningless words, which, by the tone in which they are uttered, further rouse Othello’s suspicions. Irritated by all these innuendoes, the general impetuously demands what he means, and when Iago protests his affection, challenges him on the strength of that very love to have no concealments. Thereupon Iago vows that even were his heart in his

master's hand it would still strive to keep *some* matters from his knowledge, and, having thus further whetted Othello's suspicions, solemnly bids him beware of that "green-eyed monster, jealousy."

His words fill Othello's heart with dismay; but after one exclamation of despair, he rebels against all base suspicions, haughtily declaring that before he can doubt, he must see good cause to do so; still, should he ever find it, jealousy and love would both be ended forever!

With simulated frankness, Iago artfully advises him to watch his wife when in Cassio's company, a hint not lost upon Othello, who just then, perceives her in the garden, and witnesses her gracious reception of the Cypriot men, women and children. They offer her flowers, singing a charming chorus, wherein the different voices alternately take up the strain or blend altogether. Floral offerings and good wishes are welcomed by Desdemona, whose grace and kindness so touch her husband's heart, that he vows "if she deceives him heaven itself is a liar!" These sentiments are, however, not shared by Iago, who fiendishly swears to dispel the sweet concord which now reigns.

Seeing her husband, Desdemona dismisses the chorus, and drawing near, archly informs him that she has just been talking with an unfortunate under the ban of his displeasure. When Othello abruptly inquires whom she means, she answers simply, and then, in answer to a further question, explains that Cassio has implored her to intercede for him, and that she will not believe her husband really loves her, unless he grant her request and restore the lieutenant to favor.

When Othello abruptly refuses, Desdemona resorts to coaxing; then, perceiving his pain distorted face, solicitously inquires whether he is ill? When Othello mutters something concerning a headache, she folds her handkerchief into a bandage, which she offers to bind around his brow. Half frightened by the angry gesture with which he tears it from her hand and flings it away, poor Desdemona murmurs a timid excuse, but he roughly bids her leave him. Full of compunction, even for an unconscious fault, Desdemona gently pleads for forgiveness, bidding him read in her eyes the love she cannot express, but which impels her to seek to relieve any pain he suffers, and to comfort him in every sadness. But Othello,—in a jealous aside,—wonders whether his years, or his appearance,

are against him, and mourns that her life should be ruined and his heart broken, at the very moment when he fancied they had reached perfect happiness.

While these two songs are sung, Emilia, in the background, has picked up the rejected handkerchief, which Iago tries to take from her; but she vows she knows his wickedness too well to trust him, and feels sure he must have some evil design in view. As she resists all gentler methods, Iago suddenly wrenches the handkerchief out of her hand, vowing that it will serve as a tool for his master's undoing. Although Emilia would fain argue further with him, and recover the handkerchief, she is obliged to leave, in company with her mistress, whom Othello summarily dismissed. But, even as she passes out of the room, her husband grimly cautions her in an undertone not to reveal a word of what has passed between them.

Othello is indulging in a jealous aside, concerning the falseness of Desdemona, while Iago gloats over his prize, knowing full well that "trifles light as the air are to the jealous proofs of holy writ." He further voices his intention to drop his treasure-trove in Cassio's house. Then, turning, he rejoices to see Othello writhing under the effects of the poison he has so

cunningly instilled, until, remembering the part he is playing, he hypocritically attempts consolation, which provokes a furious outburst, in which Othello describes his regret at being enlightened, for in his case ignorance was bliss indeed! He is in fact so utterly unnerved, that he is ready to bid farewell to all that has hitherto made life worth living, and mourns that "his occupation's gone."

When Iago tries to soothe him, he suddenly turns upon him, and throttling him vows he must prove what he has advanced, or die in his grasp! Assuming the tone of injured innocence, Iago excuses himself for having ventured to be outspoken, but when he tries to go away, Othello detains him, bidding him reveal all he knows. Next, on hearing further dark insinuations, Othello utters an imprecation, which shows the villain the danger of further temporizing, so, going nearer to his master, he whispers that having lately slept with Cassio, he heard him mutter in his sleep remarks which he repeats, all of which tend to show guilty love for Desdemona, and hatred of the Moor.

Listening to this account, with every demonstration of suppressed fury, Othello bursts out that it is monstrous; but when Iago soothingly

suggests that it may all have been the effect of a dream, he curtly denies it, eagerly inquiring what further proofs Iago can supply? Then Iago cunningly asks whether he ever saw Desdemona hold a handkerchief, ornamented with a strawberry design, and he rashly exclaims that this was the first gift he bestowed upon her. As it is a love-token, his rage is proportionate when Iago assures him he has recently seen that very handkerchief in Cassio's keeping. In his anger, Othello swears that no trace of his love is left, and calls upon vengeance to take its place. Then, kneeling, he registers an awful vow never to stay his wrath until fully avenged, a vow heard with joy by Iago, who holds his master in the same position, while he, in his turn, utters a hypocritical oath of fidelity "to wronged Othello."

The third act opens in a great hall in the castle, where a herald announces the arrival of a galley bearing ambassadors to Cyprus. Nevertheless, Othello continues his conversation with Iago, who goes on to describe an imaginary interview with Cassio, bidding his master observe closely, if he would have further proof, for Desdemona is coming. After a feigned departure, Iago comes back to whisper something about the handkerchief, but Othello,—

unable to bear any more,—imperiously silences and dismisses him.

Hesitating at the threshold, Desdemona gently inquires how Othello feels, and is pleased when he takes her hand and declares that its warmth would argue a frank disposition. As she answers lightly, he hints that such hands often require castigation, whereupon she defends the maligned member by reminding him that this hand bestowed her heart upon him. Still, considering all this mere amorous pastime, she soon changes the subject, saying she must speak to him about Cassio. At this name, Othello suddenly asks for her handkerchief, noticing that the one she tenders is not the same as he gave her, and warning her that a spell is hidden in the texture of that article, and that to lose or give it away were sure perdition.

Awed by his manner, Desdemona,—who cannot remember what she has done with the handkerchief, but merely deems it mislaid,—parries all his questions about it, and finally declares he is making such an ado about a trifle, to evade her request to restore Cassio to favor. She now renews her pleading with all the importunity of a wife who has never yet had any wish denied, but starts back in dismay, when

she perceives dire wrath in his words and glances. Nevertheless, when he bids her look at him and tell him what she is, she guilelessly answers his "loyal wife," and does not hesitate to swear it even, but shrinks back in terror when he brands her with an ugly epithet. Still, when Othello challenges her to repeat that oath, she staunchly affirms that she is honest, and drops upon her knees, swearing she cannot fathom the cause of his fury, but is guiltless of all wrong-doing, as she can attest by the first tears he has made her shed.

Her appearance of innocence wrings a tortured cry from Othello, who avers that the fiends themselves would never dare lay hands on a creature bearing such an angelic stamp! But, when Desdemona,—seeing signs of softer feelings,—again vows that God knows she is honest, he haughtily retorts she is perjured, although her pleading draws tears from his eyes. Seeing him weep, Desdemona tremulously asks whether *she* can have occasioned him any sorrow, a question which calls forth a repetition of the base charges which she again denies. Then, changing suddenly from sullen wrath to biting irony, Othello raises his wife, and leads her out of the room, his words full of exaggerated courtesy, and veiled accusation.

Having closed the door upon Desdemona, Othello mutters that he could better endure any of the trials to which human flesh is heir, than the shattering of this idol. Then, remembering the handkerchief, his jealous fury blazes forth anew, just as Iago enters, bidding him keep close but secret watch upon Cassio, who is coming.

When Othello has withdrawn to the portico, Iago invites Cassio into the hall, entering into conversation with him, and artfully drawing him so far away that Othello can only catch part of their conversation, so that he misunderstands all he sees and hears.

In answer to Iago's questions, Cassio says he has come hither in quest of Desdemona, to ask her again to plead for him. Catching the name only, Othello writhes with jealousy, and when Iago has turned the theme upon Bianca,—a courtesan whose society Cassio frequents,—imagines that the speaker's self-conscious airs denote a guilty passion for Desdemona and her response to his advances.

With all the craft of his nature, Iago directs matters to compass his ends, reveling in every pang Othello suffers, and watching him covertly, when he draws as near as possible, in hopes of overhearing more. By the time Othello's

cautious advance brings him within hearing distance, Iago has asked the lady-killing lieutenant what new tokens of favor he can exhibit, and is told that some fair creature has recently dropped an embroidered handkerchief in his room! The word "handkerchief," and Cassio's conscious smile when Iago accuses him of making a new conquest and trying to keep it secret, add fuel to Othello's wrath and jealousy, which are still further accentuated, when Cassio draws the handkerchief from his pocket and hands it to Iago, as proof of what he has advanced.

Talking busily to Cassio, Iago,—who has noted Othello's stealthy motions—holds the handkerchief behind his back so that his master can see and feel the apparent proof of his wife's guilt. Othello's jealous despair, and his farewell to love, is offset by the continuation of the jaunty conversation between Iago and Cassio, which ends only when booming cannons warn them that the coming vessel is at anchor, and that the ambassadors will soon appear. Then, dreading to meet Othello before he is assured of being restored to favor, Cassio hastily departs.

The lieutenant has no sooner gone, than Othello accosts Iago, grimly inquiring how he can best murder that rival? Just as if his wrath

were not sufficiently intense, Iago stimulates it, until approaching sounds denote the coming of the embassy. Meantime, heedless of cannon, trumpet, or voices, Othello vows Desdemona shall die, and bids Iago procure poison,—a proposition which the latter rejects, advising his master to strangle her in her bed. When Othello has subscribed to this proposal, Iago undertakes to dispose of Cassio, and, in reward, receives the title of lieutenant, for which he returns due thanks. Then, he suggests calling Desdemona, so that she may help receive the ambassadors, as is her privilege, and hurries off to summon her.

The ambassadors enter and present their credentials, which Othello receives with every mark of deference. He reads them, while the newcomers pay their respects to Desdemona, who appears so sad that Emilia, in an aside, wonders what may be the matter? In low tones, Desdemona explains that her depression is merely the shadow of the heavy cloud lowering on her husband's brow. Meanwhile, Iago welcomes the ambassador, and in reply to a question regarding Cassio, reveals that the latter is in disgrace, a state of affairs which Desdemona hastens to assure the ambassador is merely temporary.

Her haste to speak in behalf of Cassio, has not passed unnoticed by Othello,—still apparently absorbed by his letter,—for he sternly bids her hold her tongue. Dismayed, Desdemona stammers a timid apology, which so incenses her husband, that he raises his hand as if to strike her, and is restrained only by the shocked ambassador, who, amid general exclamations of horror, declares he cannot believe his eyes!

Paying no further heed to this official, Othello sends a herald in quest of Cassio, and when Iago ventures to ask why, merely bids him watch Desdemona closely when the ex-lieutenant appears. Iago and the ambassador next have a whispered conversation, wherein the latter questions whether this can really be the hero whom the Venetian Senate wishes to honor? Still, he dares not voice his censure more openly, lest he offend.

Just then, Cassio appears, and after again softly charging Iago to watch, Othello loudly announces that the Duke is recalling him to Venice, but has chosen as his successor, his former lieutenant, Cassio, who will henceforth be governor of Cyprus.

This announcement is broken by a rough aside to Desdemona, by Roderigo's exclamation

of despair at the prospect of losing sight of the woman he loves, and by Iago's sullen curses at being outranked by a hated rival. Having finished his announcement with a curt statement that he is ready to obey the senate's mandate, Othello folds the paper, while Cassio formally accepts the charge. The grave manner in which he does so, only strengthens the suspicions of Othello, who remarks in an aside to Iago, that the order is plainly unwelcome. This is softly confirmed by Iago, before Othello proceeds to consign ships, fortress, city and army to Cassio's keeping, again interrupting his speech to comment in an ironical aside on the tears which Desdemona cannot restrain.

Her distress is also noted by the ambassador, who, not being blinded by jealousy, rightfully attributes it to her husband's displeasure. In a vain attempt to help and comfort her, he pleads with Othello to speak kindly to her, and is shocked when the Moor roughly seizes her by the shoulder, forcing her to kneel before him. Frightened by his violence, and by the suppressed fury in his glance, the ambassador and Emilia hasten to the succor of Desdemona, who will not, however, permit them to raise her, but who, kneeling humbly before her lord and master, bewails her lost happiness, vowing

that since she no longer finds favor in his sight,
life has lost all its charms.

Meantime, Emilia is lost in pity over her sufferings, Cassio in amazement at the change in his fortunes,—which, coming in this strange way, brings him no real satisfaction,—and the ambassador, in surprise over Othello's cruelty, and in compassion for his ill-treated wife. These varying emotions are also echoed by the knights and ladies present, whose voices blend with that of the chorus, talking in groups about the strange occurrences of the day.

Drawing near Othello, Iago secretly advises him to strike quickly, repeating that time is brief, and renewing his own promise to dispatch Cassio this very evening. Then, having settled the matter in a brief colloquy with Othello, he draws near Roderigo, and in ironical tones remind him that by the morrow Desdemona will be on the high seas and he left desolate! When the young man dejectedly acquiesces, Iago hisses that a brave man shapes his own fortunes, and having thus caught Roderigo's attention, cunningly suggests that should Cassio come to an untimely end before morning, Othello would be compelled to remain at Cyprus. When Roderigo asks how such a desirable state of affairs could be brought about, Iago volunteers

to dog Cassio's footsteps, so as to ascertain when and where to perform the murder he suggests.

After Roderigo has consented, Iago again turns his attention to Othello, who, rising suddenly from his seat with wildly rolling eyes, bids all begone. The terrified crowd retreats before him, while he grimly exults in his power to strike awe into their hearts. His rage is so ungovernable, that Iago tries to account for it by explaining that his master is subject to occasional attacks of illness, which deprive him of his reason. So, when Othello again orders every one out, the ambassador quietly tries to draw Desdemona away; but, full of pity, she frees her self from his grasp, and rushes towards her husband, who now curses her with such fury, that all flee, uttering exclamations of horror.

Again rejected, Desdemona allows herself to be led away by the ambassador and Emilia, while Iago remains alone, with the still distraught Othello, who raves on for awhile that bloodshed is utterly abhorrent to him. However, a moment later, he writhes at the thought of his wife belonging to another, as the handkerchief would betoken, and this last idea is so painful, that he swoons. Iago is gloating over his prostrate form, and the success of his

scheme, when voices are heard acclaiming Othello, the island hero; these sounds draw nearer, and when all cheer "the lion of Venice," Iago, pointing to the motionless body ironically exclaims : " Behold the lion ! "

The fourth act opens in Desdemona's bedroom, that same evening, while she is retiring. Emilia comments that Othello seemed more gentle and composed, and Desdemona gladly acquiesces, adding that he had just bidden her retire, promising soon to join her. She wishes to celebrate this return of favor in a fitting manner, for she bids Emilia deck her bed with her wedding linen, which, she instructs her, is to serve as her winding sheet.

As Emilia deprecates such mournful talk, Desdemona, sitting down before her toilet-table, dreamily relates the story of her mother's maid, who, having lost her lover, went mad, and continually sang a song so doleful that even the stones were moved to pity. She hums this sad ballad to Emilia, while the latter arranges her hair for the night, then hands her a ring for safe-keeping, before lapsing again into the melancholy refrain which haunts her. She does not end it, however, for a labored sigh and a faint knock, startle her so sorely, that Emilia is obliged to investigate.

A moment later, Emilia assures her mistress that it was only the wind, and finishes her duties, while Desdemona sings the last line of her song. Then, after an inquiry whether itching eyes are not a sign of weeping, Desdemona kisses Emilia good-night, and having thus gently dismissed her, kneels before an image of the Virgin, singing a touching prayer for sinners and sinless, which concludes with a petition for aid in the hour of death.

Desdemona has retired, and is already asleep, when a secret door opens to admit Othello. After laying his scimiter on the table, he hesitates for a moment, then blows out the light, and draws near Desdemona. Her tender beauty soon gets the better of his suppressed fury, for stooping over her, he kisses her several times. Awakened by his caresses, she asks who is there, but learning it is her husband, is about to drift off into dreamland once more, when he abruptly asks whether she has said her prayers before retiring. Gentle acquiescence does not, however, satisfy him, for he solemnly repeats that if conscious of any sin as yet unforgiven, it now behooves her to ask heaven's pardon. His tone first rouses suspicions, which are confirmed when he bids

her hasten, for he does not want to kill her soul as well as her body !

Then, in answer to her exclamation, Othello briefly announces that he is going to murder her, whereat Desdemona ejaculates a prayer for heaven's mercy, to which he utters a passionate amen. His emotion awakens a faint hope in her bosom, but when she pleads with him to be merciful also, he sternly bids her think only of her sins. When she replies that her only sin consists in loving too much, he grimly retorts that it is for this very sin she is about to die ! In her surprise, Desdemona sadly asks what crime he can see in her devotion to him, but Othello hisses it is Cassio she loves, an accusation she solemnly denies. Infuriated by her supposed duplicity, Othello now reveals that he has seen the handkerchief he gave her in Cassio's hands, and when, in spite of all this, she still insists that she is guiltless, warns her that she is on her death-bed and her last moment is near.

In her terror and righteous indignation, Desdemona implores her husband to summon Cassio, so as to satisfy himself in her presence, that they are wrongfully accused. But it is only when Othello grimly assures her that Cassio's voice is silenced forever, that she

realizes that treachery has been at work, and that she is undone. Her tears however only exasperate Othello, who sees in them further proof of a guilty passion for, Cassio, for in spite of all her entreaties, he holds her down in bed and smothers her !

Cries and resistance having ceased, he stands gazing at the beautiful form of his victim, when a loud knock is heard, and Emilia demands admittance. Roused from his contemplation, Othello vaguely wonders who is knocking, until the call is repeated, Emilia imploring him to open the door,—were it only for a moment, —as she has news of great importance to communicate. Almost mechanically, therefore, the Moor opens, asks what is wanted, and learns that Cassio has just killed Roderigo !

When Othello realizes that his rival is not dead,—as he supposed,—he is horror-struck. But, before he can gasp a single word, the silence is broken by Desdemona's dying voice, proclaiming brokenly that she is unjustly slain. At this cry, Emilia runs to the bed, and beholding her mistress in the last throes of death, utters an exclamation which causes Desdemona to reopen her eyes, and repeat her statement that she dies guiltless. Then, in answer to a frantic query regarding her slayer, Desdemona, in a

last unselfish effort to shield the man she loves, assumes all the blame, breathes a last message for Othello, and dies.

Still, her supreme effort has been quite vain, for standing over her corpse, Othello brands her as a liar, calmly stating that it was he who took her life. When Emilia terms him an assassin, he concisely justifies his course, stating that Iago had discovered that his wife was faithless to her marriage vows for love of Cassio. But, at the mention of Iago, Emilia utters such a cry, that Othello reiterates the statement, and when she brands him as a fool for believing an idle report, threateningly demands whether she can deny its truth? Instead of answering, Emilia rushes to the door, calls loudly for assistance, and denounces the Moor as the murderer of her beloved mistress.

In a moment, the room is full of awestruck people, all exclaiming at once, and when Iago joins them, Emilia bids him,—if he is a man,—deny the awful charge Othello has just made. Instead, Iago coldly expresses a belief in Desdemona's guilt, and Othello tragically assures the spectators that he saw his love-token in Cassio's hands. In spite of all Iago's efforts to silence her, Emilia now reveals that her husband, after vainly begging her to steal that very

handkerchief for him, once snatched it from her by force.

Cassio,—who has entered after the others,—also steps forward, saying that he found such a handkerchief in his room, but knew not whence it came or whose it was. He has barely finished speaking, when the former governor, Montano, acknowledges that dying Roderigo has just disclosed Iago's villainous plot, which is now patent to all.

Beside himself with sorrow and remorse, Othello passionately calls upon Iago to disprove these accusations, then, seeing he does not even attempt to do so, offers to throttle him also. However, Iago contrives to escape, but only to be seized by the guards and borne off to prison by Montano's orders. The chorus are charging the soldiers not to let the wretch escape, when the frantic Othello seizes his sword. But, before he can make any use of it, the ambassador authoritatively demands its surrender.

The Moor obeys, sadly assuring him he need not fear a man, whose journey and career are well-nigh ended. Then, bending over the bed, he gazes upon his unfortunate wife, so chaste and fit for heaven, and mourns over her unhappy end. Stealthily, meantime, he draws forth a dagger, and, after exclaiming that this is all

he can do to atone, stabs himself, before Cassio or any of the spectators can prevent it. Then, creeping closer to his bride, he passionately exclaims :

“I kissed thee ere I killed thee
Now, no way but this, killing myself;
A kiss—another kiss—and yet a kiss,”

and expires on her corpse, as the curtain falls.

FRA DIAVOLO

FRA DIAVOLO, of which the music is by Auber and the words by Scribe, is a sparkling little opera with some very melodramatic situations. It was first produced in Paris, in 1830.

The opening scene represents the vine-covered porch of an Italian inn, beneath which stand tables, where carabiniers sit drinking. After the overture is finished, they intone a merry drinking chorus, calling out that wine gives them courage, and brings glory to their captain, Lorenzo, whom they toast. After finishing this song in praise of wine, they ask their leader what reward they may expect if they can capture a certain bandit, whose depredations have terrified the whole countryside. Lorenzo informs them that twenty thousand crowns will fall to their lot, a sum whose magnitude charms them, so that they all declare it is well worth trying for, especially as they will besides secure great glory.

A call for more wine summons the landlord. He is ready to bring them all they wish, for the

captain has promised to defray expenses, and urges his men to enjoy themselves as much as they please. As he does not join them, however, they comment that something must be troubling him, and Matteo confides to them that the captain's sadness is caused by love for his daughter, who is to be married to-morrow to a rich farmer. The landlord then invites the soldiers to be present at the wedding feast, but Lorenzo mutters that he would rather die than behold such a sight! While the chorus clamors for more wine,—which the landlord hastens to procure,—Zerlina, the innkeeper's daughter, draws near to the captain, timidly inquiring whether he is really about to risk his life in pursuit of a brigand up in the mountains? Lorenzo moodily replies that he is going thither, in hopes of being killed, for he cannot endure the grief of seeing her belong to another. A charming duet now takes place between the lovers, in which Zerlina implores Lorenzo to hope, while he declares that he is about to leave her forever, and that despair is his lot. Zerlina urges him not to give up, saying she too, cannot live without him, but she is just receiving his farewells, when a voice is heard without, which causes all the carabiniers to spring to their feet, and come forward to see what has happened.

Two new characters now enter upon the scene, an English lord and his wife, followed by postilions and liveried servants. Both are dressed so as to represent the English traveler,—as seen in comic papers,—and as they come upon the scene, both cry out for help, declaring they have been in the gravest peril. The captain, stepping forward, inquires what that peril may be, and comments that while the Englishman is a typical specimen of his class, the lady is both young and handsome. Meantime, Lady Pamela falls fainting on a chair, where she is supported by Zerlina, while her husband explains that he has never been in such a rage before, interrupting his remarks from time to time to rush to the lady's side and hold smelling salts to her nose.

Somewhat revived at last, Lady Pamela sings that never has such a horrible journey been made, for she has lost all her pretty garments, and the jewels which served to adorn her. Joining in her song, her husband echoes her sentiments, declaring he would far rather die in peace than endure any more such adventures. The soldiers, on hearing that the travelers have been robbed in this neighborhood, urge each other to set out immediately, in hopes of securing the brigand whom they have long

been seeking, but again Lady Pamela, Lorenzo and Zerlina sing of the terrible chieftain, evidently concealed in the mountains near them, to whose further attack they are now exposed.

As this trio ceases, the English lord steps forward, inviting the captain to receive his report and to avenge their wrongs. He explains that he has eloped with Lady Pamela,—a rich heiress whom he married at Gretna Green,—and that he is traveling to escape the unpleasant consequences attending this deed. All these statements are fully confirmed by brief ejaculations from his wife, but when the captain inquires where he was attacked, and what was taken, he declares that brigands stopped their carriage in a side road, while he was quietly sleeping beside his consort, and that after turning everything topsy-turvy, they escaped into the mountain with all their valuables.

Lady Pamela now bewails the loss of the diamonds which became her so charmingly, while Lorenzo remarks that the band is evidently led by *Fra Diavolo*, whom he is going to pursue. Bidding his soldiers take another drink and follow him, he turns aside to exchange a few parting words with Zerlina. Once more the young peasant girl implores him not to risk his life, urging that the bandit is a formidable

opponent, but Lorenzo again insists that having nothing left to live for, he is not loath to die. When Zerlina assures him that she is going to pray for him, he tells her prayers will be of small avail if she persists in marrying his rival on the morrow. Then, shaking off her detaining hand, he declares he must attend to duty, calls out to the English lord that he hopes soon to bring tidings of the missing jewels, and with a silent farewell to Zerlina, summons his subordinates, who march off the stage with a great clatter.

The English lord now remarks that the brigandier seemed greatly moved, and that Fra Diavolo must be a terrible fellow if he can inspire even a soldier with such fear. This suspicion however, is denied by the innkeeper, who declares that Lorenzo is afraid of nothing, and is guilty of but one failing. In reply to Pamela's question what that may be, he answers that the brave soldier has fallen in love with his daughter, but cannot marry her because he has nothing save his pay, and the English lord gravely agrees that such means would not suffice for matrimony, while Zerlina obediently removes all traces of the soldiers' drinking bout.

Drawing the landlord aside, the Englishman

now says he wishes to offer a large reward for the recovery of his property, coaxing his host to write a proclamation. After the landlord has been writing a few moments, the Englishman,—who has been whispering to him,—inquires aloud whether he has offered the three thousand francs premium. At mention of this small sum, Lady Pamela exclaims that such a reward is insufficient, and bids the landlord put down ten thousand, her diamonds being worth ten times more.

She also accuses her husband of having occasioned their loss by insisting upon leaving the highroad, and taking to a side path which led through the mountains. Lord Rocburg testily replies that he was compelled to do so, to escape an elegant cavalier, who has tracked them from place to place, contriving always to reach the inn where they intended to stop a few moments before them. Lady Pamela observes tartly that this man was doing no harm, and that she enjoyed a little music with him in the evening, a remark which her husband answers by saying he did not object to the music, but that the flirtation which accompanied it was decidedly too pronounced, and that he would not permit anything of the sort. Lady Pamela defies him, calls him a tyrant, and vows

she will do just as she pleases, while he tries to awe her by repeating that he is ready to pay for all the adornments she wishes, but will never consent to act the part of the too obliging husband.

This duet ended,—in which his obstinacy and her wilfulness form a piquant contrast,—Lord Rocburg declares that his wife shall never see this man again. But the words are scarcely out of his mouth, when a great noise is heard, and the innkeeper, lending an ear, opines that a new traveler is stopping in front of his house. He judges, from the noise, that it must be a person of consequence, and is about to go out to receive his orders, when a Marquis,—Fra Diavolo in disguise,—appears upon the scene.

Both the lord and his wife exclaim, for they recognize the gallant traveler who roused the husband's jealousy, while charming the wife by his gay compliments. As soon as the Marquis becomes aware of their presence, he steps forward, and bows to Lady Pamela, who seems charmed at his appearance, and expresses in an aside her amazement at his audacity in daring to follow them. While she makes these comments, her husband, also in an aside, concludes that his fears are only too well founded, for the

stranger is now staring at his wife in a way he does not approve.

The landlord and his daughter have watched the meeting of the travelers, and have come to the conclusion that the newcomer is deeply in love with Lady Pamela, and that her husband is very jealous. Remembering his duties, however, the innkeeper now bids his daughter wait upon their noble guest, but the Marquis assures her there is no haste, for he intends to remain with them until the morrow. While he is making this statement, Lord Rocburg reproaches his wife, who pertly retorts that it is not her fault if gentlemen admire her. Then the Marquis, in an aside, comments that the fair lady is evidently not at all unfavorable to him, while Zerlina, noting the glances they exchange, declares it is very plain they love each other already.

To end the scene, Rocburg leads his wife into the inn, but even while walking away beside him, she continues to cast coquettish glances at the Marquis, who, taking his seat at one of the tables under the arbor, is waited upon by the servants of the inn. Meantime the innkeeper volubly excuses himself, saying his daughter will attend to the traveler's comfort, for he is obliged to go and get his future

son-in-law, a rich farmer living two miles away.

Zerlina, at this mention of nuptials fixed for the morrow, utters a sigh of dismay, but the Marquis pays no heed to her, and merely inquires whether other travelers are staying in the inn? Matteo answers that present company excepted, the English couple are his only guests, whereupon the seated nobleman exclaims that while the lady is undoubtedly handsome, the gentleman seems very ill-tempered, indeed. Hearing this, Zerlina informs him that the Englishman has good cause to appear cross, for he has just been attacked and robbed in the mountains. Calmly continuing his meal, the Marquis remarks that he was not aware there were any brigands in that neighborhood, and when Matteo assures him that the news is only too true, declares that *he* has never been attacked, although he has often passed through that region. The innkeeper avers the country has hitherto been very safe, but adds that since Fra Diavolo's advent, things have greatly changed.

At that name, the Marquis expresses a wish to know who Fra Diavolo may be, and Zerlina answers by a song, in which she describes the brigand's sudden apparitions here and there on the mountain, in gaily tinted clothes, the fear

which he inspires, and declares that the very echoes shudder at the mere name of *Fra Diavolo*. The Marquis mockingly repeats the last verse of her song, declaring Zerlina may after all be mistaken, and that the brigand, far from being as black as he is painted, may charm some girl, to whom the name of *Diavolo* is a welcome sound.

Just then, Beppo and Giacomo, brigands in disguise, come upon the stage ; they seem such suspicious characters, that Zerlina nervously wonders who they may be. When Matteo asks what they want, they claim hospitality for the night, only to be told that the inn has no accommodations for vagabonds. One of them, however, vows that they are pilgrims, so the Marquis, taking out his purse, generously offers to pay for their board and lodging. Both express such fervent thanks, that the innkeeper wonders aloud whether it is possible they should know his guest. But the Marquis carelessly replies that he saw these travelers early in the morning, when he bestowed alms upon them.

While Matteo goes out to provide for the comfort of these new guests, the Marquis and the two newcomers remain alone on the stage. After looking around to make sure that they are quite alone, Beppo steps up to the table, and

pours out a glass of wine, which he carries to his lips, jauntily drinking to the Marquis' health. This proceeding rouses the wrath of the supposed nobleman, who hotly demands what such impudence may mean? Still, he is pacified by the excuses made by Giacomo, who explains that his comrade, being a novice, does not know the respect due to their chief.

The Marquis haughtily accepts the apology, warning Beppo that should he again show too great familiarity, he will cure him by shooting him like a dog. After thus seeing to the discipline of his subordinates, the Marquis turns to Giacomo,—who has been humbly waiting upon him,—inquires what news there is, and how they have succeeded in their undertaking. Beppo reports that they easily secured the diamonds of the English travelers. This is no news for the Marquis, who, however, is flattered when Giacomo adds that their success was due to his exact indications. So he boasts that he has followed those travelers three days, stopping at the same inns, eating at the same table, and spending his evenings singing love songs with the fair lady, merely to ascertain what valuables they owned.

Giacomo openly approves of his chief's stratagems, and when the Marquis asks

whether the Englishman tried to defend himself, vows he did not offer the slightest resistance, and that they secured their booty without losing a man. But, an inquiry concerning a cash box containing five hundred thousand francs in gold, elicits the information that no such treasure could be found, and that they had to be satisfied with the jewels only. The Marquis, vexed to think that this treasure has escaped his clutches, declares that the English lady assured him that they were traveling with large funds, and concludes to resume his former rôle, so as to discover what has become of this money.

Catching sight of Pamela, he bids his followers leave him, and gallantly steps forward to meet her. She has tripped out of the inn, calling to her husband in the background that she will order his punch. She seems greatly surprised at meeting the Marquis, and in pretended trepidation, implores him to be very cautious, for her husband is in the neighboring room, and is as jealous as Othello. The Marquis declares that there is surely no harm in singing a duet together, and that having been rudely interrupted the night before, this is a good occasion to finish their song.

Seizing a guitar, he now begins a gay little love song, in which a gondolier boasts that he

is ready to affront peril, in hopes of winning a smile from his lady-love. This is sung with killing glances; when the song is finished, he inquires in a sentimental way whether her ladyship will ever condescend to recognize the passion which consumes him? Lady Pamela pretends that she must not listen, but he refuses to let her go, and asks whether silent admiration will be equally unwelcome?

After some hesitation, Lady Pamela concludes that she really cannot prevent his admiring her, and when he begins to compliment her, she bridles and coquettes in a pleased way. A few artful compliments concerning the taste of her garments, are followed by remarks on the beauty of a locket her ladyship wears, the only jewel saved from the brigands, thanks to her cleverness in keeping it concealed. He asks her whether the locket does not contain some portrait, and when she confesses that her husband had it made to contain her miniature, begs permission to look at it, to see if it resembles her. Her credulous ladyship readily hands him the locket, but, after pretending to be lost in admiration of her image, he suddenly vows that nothing will ever induce him to part with it again, for he is already too jealous of her husband whom he dubs a barbarous tyrant. See-

ing him thrust the locket in his pocket, Lady Pamela offers a feeble protest, but he silences her, vowing dramatically that it shall rest upon his heart, and that he shall part with it only with his life!

It is while this scene is taking place, that Lord Rocburg comes out of the inn, wondering what can detain his wife so long, and why his punch is not forthcoming? As he appears on the threshold, the Marquis seizes a guitar to sing the second verse of his love song. Lord Rocburg wishes to know what his wife is doing there, and when she retorts that she is fond of music, vows he cannot bear it. A trio ensues, wherein Lady Pamela says that she likes music, mainly because it annoys her spouse, who feels sure that it is robbing him of his wife, while the Marquis is equally certain that it serves his purposes, by making the lady so kind, that she is ready to reveal all he wants to know.

Servants now appear to remove the table, and while they are thus employed, the Marquis turns to Lady Pamela, inviting her to repeat the duet. Lord Rocburg, however, thinks that it would be far better for his wife to see about his punch, although the Marquis declares that is work for a servant, and summons one by a loud call. As

Lord Rocburg testily declines the drink thus offered, the Marquis blandly inquires whether the loss of his diamonds has put him out, and whether he was so unfortunate as to be robbed also of the five hundred thousand francs which he was about to deposit in some bank?

The Englishman proudly replies that the money is still safe, and when the Marquis assures him effusively that the news is as welcome to him as to the travelers, Lady Pamela exclaims that he is very good, indeed, to feel such interest in their affairs. The Marquis truthfully opines that his interest is more natural than they suppose, and inquires how they managed to conceal the money so that the brigands could not find it? The Englishman laughingly bids him guess, and when he modestly declines, triumphantly informs him that the gold has been changed into bank bills, and sewn in his own and his wife's garments. With an admiring glance at the lady, the Marquis comments that her dresses are precious indeed, assuring the Englishman that he is very glad to learn this clever stratagem, for the knowledge may be useful to him some time.

Their conversation is interrupted by a warrior-like march, and as the English couple rush to the rear of the stage to discover what it may

portend, Beppo and Giacomo approach the Marquis, whispering that a brigadier and his soldiers are approaching, and that it might be well for them to run away. The Marquis scorns so cowardly a suggestion, and urges them to be brave, a course which his followers are not anxious to pursue, until he assures them that they are in no danger as long as he is with them.

Fra Diavolo has barely finished this remark, when Lorenzo marches in, followed by his troops, and in a moment the whole stage is invaded with people from the village, who have come to admire the returning soldiers. The latter sing that they have overtaken the brigands, and return covered with glory. Just then Zerlina rushes forward expressing her joy to see Lorenzo again, but before he can answer this demonstration, the English couple step forward, begging to learn the result of his mission. In a few brief words the brigadier tells them he succeeded in surprising the robbers, information which fills the heart of the Marquis with rage, because he was not there when his men were in peril.

Lorenzo describes how bravely the brigands fought, and concludes by saying that in spite of all their daring they were over-mastered, and

that twenty of them are now lying lifeless on the mountainside! While the Marquis groans at hearing these tidings, Lorenzo finishes his report, and the chorus join in with a triumphant shout of victory. Drawing forth a jewel-case, Lorenzo shows it to Lord Rocburg, telling him it was found on one of the slain brigands. Both English travelers greet the sight of this case with rapture, for it contains the very diamonds whose loss they were bewailing. While they rejoice, the Marquis, in an aside, expresses dismay at having lost men and jewels, vowing he will take his revenge upon Lorenzo, who has caused him such a serious loss.

When Lorenzo prepares to leave the scene, Zerlina inquires why he is leaving, so he explains that the chief of the brigands escaped, and that he cannot rest until he has succeeded in getting him also into his power. Zerlina is trying to detain him, but he is about to move away, when Lady Pamela offers him ten thousand francs, saying this sum was promised to any one who recovered the missing diamonds. At first, Lorenzo modestly refuses the gift, but when Lady Pamela suggests that it may enable him to win Zerlina's hand, the maiden eagerly accepts it in his name, returning fervent thanks to Providence, who thus fulfills her

secret wishes, while Lorenzo rapturously cries that he will now be able to win her hand, and both unite in a joyful song, wherein they express delight to belong to one another.

While the Englishman and his wife gloat over their jewels, and the Marquis and his two subordinates mutter that they will yet be avenged, the soldiers sing noisily. Lorenzo is speaking to his men, while the Marquis gives rapid orders to Beppo and Giacomo, informing them that all is not ended, and that they may yet retrieve their losses and outwit the soldiers, who are about to depart on a wild goose chase. Meantime, Zerlina takes leave of her lover, and the act closes with a soldiers' chorus, sung as the troops march off the stage.

The next act opens in the inn. Zerlina enters, light in hand, calling to the English travelers that she will prepare their room while they finish their dinner. Then she sets her light down on the table, and with a sigh of relief declares she is glad to be alone, and out of reach of the many calls for service, so as to think of her beloved, whose image is graven deep in her heart. She is just rejoicing over her wedding on the morrow, when the English travelers come into the room. So she informs them that their apartment is quite ready, news which is

very welcome to his lordship, who is very sleepy, but which his wife does not receive so graciously, as she would like to sit up somewhat longer and be entertained.

In an aside, Zerlina thinks it strange after only one year's marriage, to see husband and wife disagree in such trifling matters, and declares that such will never be the case with her and Lorenzo. Lady Pamela sagely opines that her husband has changed for the worse, while he retorts that he does not recognize her, for she no longer seems anxious to please him. He adds that it behooves them to go to rest, seeing they must leave early on the morrow, although Lady Pamela wishes to stay to witness Zerlina's wedding.

The English lady then draws near the peasant girl, assuring her that she can give her excellent advice concerning the best way to manage a husband. But Lord Rocburg soon interrupts her little lecture, and Zerlina shows them their room, after supplying an extra pillow, and courteously offering her services as lady's maid. They are just retiring, when the Englishman becomes aware that his wife no longer wears her diamond locket, and anxiously inquires what she has done with it? Slightly confused, Lady Pamela evades his query,

pressing him to come to bed as soon as possible, for she is very sleepy.

The three actors have passed out of sight, and the stage is in semi-darkness, when the Marquis appears. He is reconnoitring, and having ascertained that one of the doors leads into the Englishman's apartments, and the other into an empty storeroom, makes up his mind to call his men. Opening the window, he takes a mandolin, saying that serenades are so customary in Italy, that he will surely rouse no suspicions. Perched on the window-sill, he sings a popular air, and as he concludes the second verse, Beppo and Giacomo climb in at the window, and are told to make no noise. A dialogue ensues, in which the three men swear to recover the diamonds they have lost, and secure the money given to Zerlina and the funds hidden in the garments of the two English travelers. This time, they are not going to spare their victims either, for they are determined to take their revenge for the death of their twenty companions, lying cold and still on the mountainside. The principal person against whom they swear vengeance, is, however, Lorenzo, captain of the carabiniers, thanks to whom they have met with this disaster.

Their plans are just completed when they hear Zerlina returning, calling out a last good-night to her guests. To avoid being seen by her, all three withdraw into the storeroom, where they intend to remain until she has gone and left them a clear field. To their amazement, Zerlina, after closing the door between her room and that of the English travelers, sets her light on the table and begins to prepare for bed, sighing that she is very weary and that her couch, although not as soft as that of the travelers, will be very grateful. After taking off and folding the bed-spread, she lays it on a chair just inside the storeroom, little suspecting that three pairs of eyes are watching her every movement. While she takes out some pins and removes an upper garment, she sings a gay little song, confessing how she longs for the morrow, when she and her lover will be united. She vows that they two will live far more happily than the English couple, for Lorenzo is not jealous, and she far from fickle.

As she concludes her song, she pricks her finger, and while she is absorbed in contemplating the wound thus made, Beppo, peeping through the half open door, comments upon her attractions, until the Marquis pushes him aside, telling him that the post of observation is

his. He therefore takes up in his turn the agreeable task of watching Zerlina's every motion, and of listening to the rest of her song. Meantime, Zerlina coquettes before her glass, wondering whether her lover will find her good-looking, and ends by declaring that although not as slender and elegant as the aristocratic lady upon whom she has just waited, her lover can have no cause to be displeased with her appearance.

Her innocent coquetry so amuses the three spectators, that they burst out laughing. The noise they thus make startles Zerlina, who, fancying it may have come from the Englishman's apartment, listens at the door. In a few moments she comes back, resumes her song, and then having taken off her shoes, and placed her light near the bed, declares it is high time to sleep. The hidden spectators, who are anxiously awaiting the moment when she will no longer impede their movements, are delighted to hear her say she is sleepy, and silently watch her as she kneels beside her bed to whisper a prayer for her own and her lover's safety. She is sitting on the edge of the bed, before undressing, when all at once, overcome by sleep, she sinks down on her pillow.

The three spectators now steal out of the

storeroom, declaring that they are armed for vengeance, and the Marquis blows out the light so it cannot betray them. All three brigands are about to enter the Englishman's chamber, when one of them suggests that Zerlina might awaken and give the alarm. The best way to ensure silence is to make use of a dagger, according the Giacomo, and when the Marquis demurs, his men profess no longer to recognize their bold leader. Stung by this taunt, Fra Diavolo hands his dagger to Beppo, bidding him do his will. The bravo is about to stab Zerlina, when she murmurs in her sleep the words of her prayer, imploring the Virgin to watch over her. Her innocent invocation disturbs the would-be murderer, who has to be encouraged to make a second attempt. This too, is fruitless, because before the blow can fall, a sudden noise is heard without, and all three exclaim in terror, wondering what it may mean.

Loud knocking at the inn-door awakens Zerlina, who exclaims that it is too bad to have to rise already, for it still seems the middle of the night. Her complaint is answered by a chorus of manly voices, clamoring for admittance, saying that they are the carabiniers who have returned to ask shelter. The word cara-

biniers terrifies the two brigands, whom their chief has to admonish not to show the white feather. Just then, too, Lorenzo's voice is heard without, calling Zerlina, and bidding her welcome her lover. She hears these words with rapture, and while she is leaning out of the window answering him, the three men swear they will yet take their vengeance, although for the time being they must not allow themselves to be seen.

Once more the chorus is heard outside, and the loud knocking is renewed, so Zerlina, dressing in the dark, throws her lover the keys, bidding him show his men into the kitchen, where a lamp is still lighted, and where she will soon join them. Notwithstanding her haste, she pauses to adjust her garments carefully, declaring that a girl cannot appear before military men without being suitably attired. But the noise has evidently startled the English travelers also, for Lord Rocburg is heard calling out to his wife not to be alarmed, as he is going to ascertain the cause of the clamor which disturbs rest to which he is entitled.

The Englishman enters by the door on the left, just as Lorenzo comes in by that on the right. Turning, Zerlina becomes aware of her lover, whom she reproves for coming thus to

her chamber, but he promptly disarms her by a well turned compliment. Their conversation, however, is soon interrupted by Lord Rocburg, in sketchy costume, who, seeing Lorenzo, asks whence he comes, and the cause of all the noise? Lorenzo replies that he has news, and when Zerlina and the Englishman eagerly inquire what it may be, relates that after following a false trail, they were warned that Fra Diavolo had been seen in an open carriage, and that they are now following close on his tracks.

The man who supplied this information is acting as their guide, and they have stopped at the inn for a few hours' rest and refreshment, after their long tramp. The Englishman commiserates their sufferings, but when Zerlina hears that her lover is famished, she innocently inquires why he did not stop at one of the many inns on the way? He tells her that at other inns he could have found food, but no Zerlina, so she is flattered, and doubly pleased when he slyly adds that it is a fine thing to be captain, for you can then force your men to go on until you reach the place where you are sure to meet the lady you love! Zerlina touched by his devotion, vows she will get him something to eat immediately, but he detains her long enough to bid her provide first for his men, who, not being in

love may not prove so patient. His manner is so confidential, that Zerlina saucily suggests he is laboring under the delusion that they are already married, whereupon he clasps her close, assuring her that although he knows full well she is not yet his, he is only too happy to think that they will be one on the morrow.

The lovers' conversation is interrupted by a loud noise from the weary carabiniers, who clamor for some one to attend to their wants. Slipping out of Lorenzo's arms, Zerlina prepares to satisfy them, promising to keep the best of everything for her lover. While she goes out, the Englishman tells the brigadier that he must hurry back to reassure his wife, who, he declares, clung to him far more tenderly in her fright than she had done for some time past.

Lorenzo mockingly remarks that fear has its compensations, and the foreigner vows it may be good for women, but that as far as men are concerned they are far too brave to dread anything. At that moment, one of the brigands in the store-room accidentally overthrows a chair, making a clatter which blanches the Englishman's cheek, and causes him to retreat behind the brigadier with great celerity, inquiring in trembling tones what that noise may mean? The Marquis, in low tones, dubs Beppo an awkward fellow,

while Lorenzo carelessly assures the timorous Englishman that a piece of furniture must have been knocked over in the neighboring room. When Lord Rocburg declares that they are alone here, he suggests it may be her ladyship, a solution which does not satisfy the Englishman, who again objects that the apartments he occupies are on the opposite side from whence the noise came. He insists, until the brigands see the moment when they will be discovered, and Lorenzo, annoyed, finally suggests that it is easy to settle the matter by examining the adjoining room, which he feels sure is perfectly empty.

At the moment when the captain advances towards the lumber-room, the Marquis, after brief injunctions to his followers, steps out, closing the door behind him. As he does so, Lord Rocburg and the captain exclaim in surprise, but he mysteriously lays one finger on his lips, bidding them be silent. Both now inquire what he is doing here, for they naturally wonder at his presence in such a place and at such an hour. Feigning embarrassment, the Marquis stammers that there are some delicate secrets which people are not in the habit of publishing on the house-tops.

These words and the accompanying glances

inspire both his hearers with such jealousy, that both begin to question him, inquiring whether he came there by appointment. In asides, Lord Rocburg expresses great suspicions of his wife, Lorenzo wonders whether his lady-love is not faithful to him, the Marquis openly rejoices at their discomfiture, and his two companions, peeping out of their hiding-place, gloat over the prospect of getting the better of their foes.

This scene is scarcely over, when the Englishman steps forward, demanding an explanation, while Lorenzo inquires in a whisper whether it was Zerlina who decoyed him hither? The Marquis leaves both in doubt for awhile, and then jauntily remarks that perchance he came here in quest of both ladies. Taking his lordship aside, he confesses having long admired Lady Pamela, who does not scorn his attentions, as he can prove by a locket she bestowed upon him. He then exhibits the jewel, and this proof fills his lordship with such fury, that he actually challenges the Marquis.

Drawing Lorenzo aside, the Marquis next informs him he has been playing a part with the Englishman to cloak his shame; when Lorenzo demands what this means, he calmly announces that he was waiting in that side room to join Zerlina. Lorenzo is so indignant, that at first he

does not believe what his rival tells him, but when the Marquis adds more, he suddenly vows that if his mistress is really faithless, he will be revenged. In his anger, he invites the Marquis to meet him on the mountainside, near some black rocks, at seven on the morrow.

This appointment being made, the Marquis expresses delight at having thus secured the captain, who will now pay dear for having slain twenty men from his band. While he is triumphing, and his two companions echo his sentiments, Lorenzo and Lord Rocburg, in asides, comment on the bitterness of being betrayed by those they love.

As they conclude Lady Pamela steps out of her bedroom, and Zerlina reappears on the scene. Lady Pamela asks her husband why he has not returned to soothe her fears, while Zerlina runs to Lorenzo, saying that the meal she has prepared for him is ready. Both women are received with great coolness by the men, who, believing the tales told by the Marquis,—now resist all their efforts to discover why they are acting so strangely.

Then both turn in exasperation upon the ladies, vowing they will have nothing more to do with them, and bidding them begone. Next, in subdued tones, they renew their appoint-

ments with the Marquis, and the curtain falls, while the four principal actors express the bitterness caused by deception and jealousy.

The third act shows a different part of the same inn, with a mountain path on the left, down which *Fra Diavolo* comes, singing that he has posted his companions at the black rocks, to take their revenge upon the captain of the carabiniers. As he comes down, he trolls a merry lay, describing how he takes toll from all rich travelers, but bestows alms upon poor pilgrims, and exacts nothing from pretty peasant girls, save the favors they voluntarily bestow. He concludes that time is pressing, and that he must enjoy life, and get out of it all the amusement he can. His song ended, he indulges in soliloquy, wherein he explains that he is sure of Lorenzo, who will be at the rocks at seven, and that while his men dispose of this victim, he will watch for Matteo, who has gone to get the young farmer whom his daughter is to marry.

While the wedding festivities are taking place, and the peasants are all in the inn, *Fra Diavolo* intends to come down with a few of his men, kill the Englishman, seize his money and jewels, and carry his wife off up into the mountain. Laughing gaily, he declares that Lady Pamela will doubtless enjoy such an adventure, which will

give her the opportunity of posing as a heroine in the London drawing-rooms, where she will doubtless claim that her adventures were most exciting. Before carrying out these plans, however, he must make sure that the carabiniers have gone, and has therefore directed Beppo and Giacomo to remain at the inn, and ring a bell in the little hermitage as warning when the coast is clear.

Looking around him, and not finding the two men at the appointed spot, he opportunely remembers that he promised to write any further directions, and put them in a hollow tree close by the inn. So he quickly scribbles a few words, thrusts the paper in the hole, and disappears, just as Matteo, Francesco, and a number of villagers come marching towards the inn. It is Easter Sunday, so all are clad in their best, and bear flowers and greens. As they advance, they sing a chorus in praise of the Easter Festival, declaring it is a fine day on which to celebrate a wedding.

Just then, the two brigands in disguise also appear, and after looking around vainly for their captain, draw near the inn and place themselves at one of the tables, so as to seem innocent travelers, yet keep watch over all that is going on. The chorus having finished, Matteo brings

Francesco forward, bidding him welcome as his future son-in-law, and advising him to pray at the wayside shrine, so as to secure the Virgin's blessing. This suggestion finds favor not only with the bridegroom, but also with the peasants, who cast their flowers at the Madonna's feet and sing a beautiful prayer. When this is finished, Matteo points to the inn, telling Francesco that his bride awaits him, and, as they descend, all the youths claim health as life's best boon, while the maidens express a desire for good husbands. The invocation to the Virgin is repeated, and the chorus marches off, leaving none but the two brigands upon the stage.

In a dialogue, Giacomo and Beppo now rehearse their captain's directions, and remembering that he said he would leave a message, if he did not see them, look for a letter in the hollow tree. They soon draw from that place of concealment the paper dropped by *Fra Diavolo*, and read that as soon as Zerlina's lover has departed, and the carabiniers are out of sight, they are to ring the bell at the hermitage, as a signal for companions to carry out the rest of their plan. After doubtfully remarking that it is unlucky to commit murder on an Easter Sunday, the brigands finally conclude that an

Englishman is only half a Christian, and that the world will therefore be well rid of him.

It is while they are talking thus, that Lorenzo steps out of the inn, brooding in a melancholy way over his appointment at the black rocks. They softly comment upon his down-cast appearance, and opine that he will not have much time to sigh when once within range of their comrades' rifles! Then, stealing a short distance up the path, they conceal themselves, so as to view all that is going on, without being seen by any one at the inn.

Deeming himself alone and unheard, Lorenzo sings a sad little song, in which he laments the faithlessness of Zerlina, and bids farewell to love forever, declaring that he can never forget the girl who had seemed to him all that was true and charming. In his soliloquy, he owns that he has had much ado to restrain himself, and not denounce her for her faithlessness, but he is too generous to wish her any harm, and thinks that although lost to him, she may yet find happiness with a lover of her father's choosing.

It is while he is standing there, sad and undecided, that the innkeeper comes out, bidding his servants bring tables, and treat the wedding party and the carabiniers, who must shortly start out in pursuit of the brigands. Zerlina has

come upon the stage with her father, and drawing near Lorenzo, timidly informs him that the young farmer who just arrived has been presented to her as her bridegroom. Unless, therefore, the carabinier speak immediately, his last chance will be gone, and her hand pledged to another !

As Lorenzo remains unmoved by all she says, Zerlina pleads with him, until he roughly silences her, muttering that he saw the man she concealed with such guilty care in her chamber ! These words fill Zerlina with utter amazement, and when Lorenzo rushes off wildly to join his soldiers, she openly wonders what they may mean ? Just then, however, the two brigands call for more wine, and when she takes their order, recognize in her the pretty girl they had watched at her toilet, the night before.

The recollection of the amusing scene they witnessed, causes them to forget where they are, and one of them grotesquely mimics Zerlina posturing before the glass, singing the little song wherein she declared that although not as pretty as her guest, she was surely not amiss. Noticing both action and words, Zerlina wonders what horrible plot has been woven against her happiness ?

The English couple come out of the inn, and

the double chorus of peasants and soldiers loudly exclaim that it is time to go about their business. The soldiers are about to march off the stage, when Zerlina presses forward, bidding them hear what she has to say. Then, seizing her lover's hand, she solemnly declares that she does not know why he suspects her, swearing that she was alone in her room last night, but that strange to relate, words which she uttered in private have been repeated close beside her.

Her tone of innocence is so convincing, that Lorenzo asks who repeated the words she thought she had said in secret, and Zerlina, pointing to the two brigands, vows those men must have been hidden within sight and hearing, although she cannot imagine where.

Quick as a flash, Lorenzo bids his soldiers seize the men, and the chorus deem this a judicious order. Then, summoning the guide who brought them hither, Lorenzo bids him state whether they belong to the band of brigands. The peasant fails to recognize them, and Beppo and Giacomo both begin to think they may yet escape, when the innkeeper, who has been investigating their pockets, hands Lorenzo a paper, saying that if any plot exists,

this document may cast some light upon it. Opening the paper, Lorenzo reads Fra Diavolo's explicit directions, and, while the chorus exclaim at the brigands' perfidy, the English couple conclude to make friends again, as, after all, they are safest together.

Two of the carabiniers are now directed to escort Giacomo up to the hermitage, forcing him to give the signal and watching him closely so he shall not escape. Then, turning to the wedding party Lorenzo bids them hide, and placing Beppo in the middle of the stage, orders him to stand there, and obey his signals, under penalty of being shot. As soon as the carabiniers and Giacomo reach the hermitage, the bell begins to toll, the villagers conceal themselves, and the principal actors slip behind trees close by the inn.

From their respective hiding-places, they make a brief invocation to Providence, and then begin to watch for the arrival of the brigand chief. As the bell stops ringing, Fra Diavolo comes down the hill, and seeing Beppo, softly calls out to know whether it is safe for him to appear. In a whisper, Lorenzo bids the brigand answer his master in the affirmative, but Beppo obeys in such trembling tones, that the soldier compels him to repeat

his words in a louder and more confident voice.

Having thus been assured that he can appear without danger, Fra Diavolo jauntily steps down the path, singing a gay refrain, wherein he declares that fortune will surely favor him. The peasant who has served as guide recognizes him, while the English couple exclaim that the dreaded brigand is the Marquis, who accompanied them during part of their journey! While these asides are taking place, Fra Diavolo steps upon the stage and lays his hand upon Beppo's shoulder, triumphantly declaring that the English lord, his wealth and pretty wife are now all within his power.

Just as he utters this proud boast, Lorenzo appears, and at his signal, the villagers and carabiniers start up on all sides, surrounding the brigand chief and his man Beppo. In the twinkling of an eye, Fra Diavolo is disarmed by the peasants, while bitterly exclaiming that he has fallen into a snare. Lorenzo, however, politely assures him that the place of their rendezvous has changed, while the chorus renew their shouts of victory, and the principal actors join in a quintette, vowing that Fra Diavolo can never terrify them again, and that their happiness is secure. They are still singing,

when the brigand chief is marched off the stage ; and the curtain falls as the chorus declare that their captain shall marry the lady he loves, as reward for his valor.

L'ELISIRE D'AMORE

THE light opera, or *Opera Bouffe*, called "The Elixir of Love," of which the music is by Donizetti and the words by Romani, was first played at Milan in 1832, and was produced seven years later before an English audience in London.

The curtain rises upon a village scene in Italy, showing a large tree before a homestead, with a river and open country beyond. While reapers of both sexes are busy in the fields, and washerwomen are splashing down by the waterside, Adina, heroine of the opera, is seated in the shade reading busily. She is so absorbed in her story, that she apparently pays no heed to her lover, the young peasant Nemorino, who is gazing at her with all his heart in his eyes.

The beautiful opening symphony is followed by a chorus sung by the peasants, who dilate upon the pleasure of lying in the shade and lingering by the river, saying that one can thus easily temper the ardor of the sun, but that

there is no way in which to escape from the burning pangs of love. Then they dwell upon the happy state of the heart-whole reaper, who needs think but of his work and the repose to follow.

No sooner is this chorus ended, than Nemonino is heard expressing his admiration for his lady-love, who is so diligently improving her mind, while he,—poor wight,—is so madly in love with her, that he can do nothing but sigh. Still, he longs to be learned and witty so as to win Adina's love, and wonders by what means he can become worthy of so peerless a creature.

All at once, Adina looks up from her book, and laughing merrily, pronounces it the most amusing tale she has ever perused. The peasant girl Gianetta,—lingering near there,—comments upon her laughter, and she and the chorus entreat their young mistress to tell them the tale which has so pleased her. Adina then informs them that it is the famous old legend of Tristan, who, having fallen in love with the beautiful but hard-hearted Isolde (or Isotta), and not being able to touch her heart, has recourse to an enchanter. The latter gives him a magic potion, called "The Elixir of Love," and no sooner has Tristan quaffed this drink, than Isolde re-

lents, pledges her faith to him, and ever after the lover has good cause to praise the draught which wrought his happiness.

Adina has barely finished telling this tale to the spectators,—not the least interested of which is Nemorino—when all exclaim in chorus over the power of such a potion. As they conclude, the roll of a drum is heard, and Sergeant Belcore enters, at the head of his corps of soldiers, who draw up in the background, where the peasants speedily cluster around them. Besides being a soldier, Belcore is a lady-killer, and as Adina is the prettiest, as well as the richest girl in the place, he has singled her out as the recipient of his attentions.

Stepping forward jauntily, he now offers her a bouquet, conceitedly remarking that just as Paris of old bestowed the apple upon the loveliest of the goddesses on Mount Ida, he awards flowers to her as the fairest of her sex, hoping that in return she will bestow upon him her affections. Such is the fatuousness of his behavior, that Adina and the chorus mockingly comment upon his modesty; but simple Nemorino is most concerned by the fine appearance of his rival, and envies the boldness which enables a man to speak to Adina without trembling.

Nothing daunted by the saucy remarks of Adina or of the chorus, Belcore assures the young lady that he feels certain he has won her heart, for no girl has ever been known to resist the attractions of a soldier, even Venus, mother of Love, having been conquered by Mars the god of war! Again the chorus and Adina make laughing comments upon his diffidence, while Nemorino thinks that as his lady-love smiles, she cannot be very angry with this bold suitor.

Still undeterred by comment or spectators, the sergeant proposes that Adina capitulate, informing him what day she will follow him to the altar. Adina objects that there is no haste, and says that she would like a few days' leisure wherein to make up her mind, a remark which fills Nemorino's heart with anguish, because he fears this may prove a tacit acceptance of the gallant suitor.

A beautiful song ensues, wherein Belcore urges Adina to waste no precious time but marry him immediately, for a soldier is here to-day and gone to-morrow, and she cannot too soon make sure of her conquest. The maiden retorts that men are very conceited, but that while a soldier may find it comparatively easy to triumph over a foe, the conquest of a woman's heart is a far more difficult matter.

Meantime, Nemorino soliloquizes that he wishes his love would inspire him with sufficient courage to express his sentiments fluently, in which case he thinks he might, even yet, win his beloved. But he is timid, and shrinks away without daring to say a word while Gianetta and the chorus, interested spectators in this little scene, express amusement at what is happening, and declare that it would be a good joke if Adina,—who has played the coquette with all the youths of the neighborhood,—should at last find a master, and succumb before the cavalier wooing of the sergeant.

Becoming aware once more of the presence of his comrades, Belcore now suggests that his men be allowed to rest awhile beneath the shade, in front of the farmhouse, a request which Adina not only grants with pleasure, but she even proposes a bottle of wine to refresh them after their long march. The sergeant expresses his thanks, and in an aside comments that he has evidently found favor, for he is already being treated as a member of the family.

While the soldiers seat themselves, and the refreshments are served, Adina dismisses the peasants, informing them that as the sun is setting, their labors are over for the day, and that the hour of rest has struck for them too.

She is about to turn away to help Gianetta wait upon her guests, when Nemorino timidly detains her. He has been such a diffident suitor, that she has always treated him without any consideration, and pettishly inquires whether he means to subject her to further sighs and entreaties? She tartly remarks that it would be far wiser were he to go to town and see his uncle, who is reported seriously ill, than to waste his time about a girl who does not care for him. The youth replies that however ill his uncle may be, the latter's sufferings can be nothing, compared to those her unhappy lover endures, for although he has tried a thousand times to tear himself away from her presence, he has never yet been able to do so. When Adina suggests that should his uncle disinherit him, he will be penniless and die of hunger, he bitterly comments that whether he die of hunger or of love is evidently a matter of no consequence to her!

This despairing remark rouses a slight feeling of compassion in Adina's heart, so she assures Nemorino that she knows he is good and modest, and not vain like the sergeant. Because she respects him, she feels it her duty to inform him she can never love him, and advises him to leave her, and no longer try to win a capricious person.

When Nemorino sadly inquires why she varies, she sings a charming air, wherein she bids him to ask the zephyr why it flits from flower to flower, and states that her moods are just variable as the wind, which is ever changing.

When Nemorino replies that he cannot rid himself of this passion for her, she in turn wishes to know why he is so constant, and he replies that he is like a river, which, in spite of all obstacles, flows downward and is lost in the far distant sea. Then the two lovers join in an exquisite duet, wherein the one avers his constancy, while the other prides herself upon her fickleness, both ending by declaring that they must be true to their natures.

The next scene represents a square in the village, with an inn on one side. Peasants of both sexes are wandering to and fro, going about their business, for this is the time of day when the village street is quite animated. All at once, a trumpet is heard pealing so gaily, that women and children crowd to the doorsteps to see what can occasion the joyous clamor. The men, too, pause on their way, to inquire of Gianetta what may occasion all this noise. The foremost exclaim that a wonderful golden chariot is coming, wherein sits a man, who, they conjecture, must be a baron or a mar-

quis, if not some royal personage. The men therefore suggest that they doff their hats and cheer aloud as the rich man passes, so he may bestow upon them some largesse, or treat them to a drink, while the girls preen their feathers, thinking that if they look their prettiest, they may win a compliment, or, perchance, make a conquest.

All draw aside as the chariot appears on the scene. It is occupied by Dr. Dulcamara, a quack, seated aloft on a gilt chair, surrounded by papers and bottles, while behind him, a gorgeously clad attendant sounds the trumpet. As the chariot comes to a standstill, the village inhabitants throng curiously around it, and the doctor begins an amusing tirade, wherein he praises his wares to the skies. He claims that he has nostrums for all diseases, describes himself as sole inventor of the "Magic Pain Extractor," and declares that not only can he cure all ailments, but can change old men into youths, dry widows' tears, efface matrons' wrinkles, make maidens irresistible, and bestow upon gallants the power to win their sweethearts!

He declares that although known all over the world,—and elsewhere,—he wishes to benefit his fellow citizens by bestowing upon them these priceless remedies at merely nominal

rates, and that instead of charging the hundred or so dollars which his drugs deserve, he is content to part with them for the small sum of one dollar.

The charlatan rattles off this speech so effectively, that all the rustics listen in open-mouthed amazement, and as he concludes it, one and all vow the price is small for so wonderful a drug. Dulcamara next informs them that a keen desire to serve them and his country, makes him so liberal, but urges them to purchase quickly, for he must soon pass on to benefit others as well. Thus admonished, the peasants crowd around him, money in hand, all trying to procure some of the wonderful remedies he has so ably described.

Hidden in the throng, poor Nemorino hears the doctor proclaim that he is master of all secrets, and wonders whether, perchance, heaven has sent this man to help him. Drawing near, he timidly inquires whether the doctor really possesses important secrets, and when Dulcamara reassures him on this score, asks whether he has ever heard of Queen Isolde's Elixir? The doctor at first seems non-plussed, but when Nemorino goes on to explain that he is in search of an "Elixir of Love," Dulcamara boldly claims to be the discoverer and sole manu-

facturer of that commodity, which, he says, is in great demand throughout the world.

When Nemorino asks how much he charges for such a boon, Dulcamara is about to set an exorbitant price, but the simple suitor stammers that he hopes it will not prove beyond his means, as he has only one dollar to his name. The artful doctor replies that fortunately a dollar is the exact price of the potion, and in exchange for Nemorino's coin, hands over a bottle, which in reality contains nothing but Bordeaux wine, but which Nemorino fondly imagines filled with a magic draught.

An amusing duet now follows, wherein Nemorino expresses the utmost gratitude for the quack's services, while Dulcamara confides to the audience that of all the fools he has ever seen, this one seems the greatest. Their song over, the doctor is about to depart, when Nemorino anxiously detains him to inquire how he is to take the remedy, and when it will act? The doctor directs him to shake the bottle, uncork it carefully, drink quickly without allowing any of the fumes to escape, and announces that the effects will appear within twenty-four hours, remarking, in an aside, that by that time he will be safely out of reach, so that no revenge can

be taken upon him should the drug not have the desired result.

Being further assured that the remedy is pleasant to the taste, Nemorino again expresses boundless gratitude, whereupon that doctor enjoins great secrecy upon him, telling him that should the people become aware of his selling an Elixir of Love, they would doubtless mob him in their efforts to obtain it. So Nemorino swears that no power on earth shall wring from him one word of the secret, saying he will drink the whole dose, without giving even a drop to Adina, and Dulcamara departs.

Left alone Nemorino drinks the contents of the bottle. Because he is an abstemious youth, the affect is almost instantaneous, and he comments wonderingly on the fact that he already feels his cheeks flush, his blood flow faster, and his heart full of an ardor and confidence to which he had hitherto been a stranger. Seating himself on the bench before the inn, he draws out of his wallet some bread and fruit, which he eats with a healthy appetite, singing to himself over his rustic meal.

The noise he makes attracts Adina, who comes out, and seeing her former lover acting in such a strange fashion, wonders what has befallen him. Nemorino's first impulse is, as

usual, to rush forward and greet her, but is restrained by the remembrance of the way in which she last received him, and especially by the hope that on the morrow all will be changed. While Adina comments upon his altered behavior, he therefore rejoices over the prospect of his coming triumph, and in a duet the lovers express their conflicting emotions, for Adina is really nettled at his apparent indifference, and determined to bring him back into her toils.

They have just finished their duet, when Belcore appears, singing gaily, yet complaining that a siege is a tedious affair, and that he hopes soon to be victor. His appearance is welcomed by Adina, who fancies that by coquetting with him she can bring about the desired result of making Nemorino so jealous, that he will no longer feign indifference to her charms. A duet is sung between Adina and the sergeant, wherein he urges her to consent to a speedy marriage, while she avoids giving a definite answer, until, exasperated by Nemorino's continued indifference, she suddenly declares that she will marry Belcore six days hence.

Belcore angrily comments upon Nemorino, whose laughter at this announcement rouses his ire, while Adina expresses displeasure that her former lover should appear so blithe on hearing

a piece of news which should fill his heart with dismay. But Nemorino, in an aside, declares that the soldier who deems he has triumphed over every obstacle, will find himself sorely defeated when the magic Elixir takes effect on the morrow!

The three have barely finished singing, when the roll of drums is again heard, and Gianetta rushes on the scene, followed by the peasants and the soldiers of Belcore's troop. Gianetta announces that the soldiers are coming in quest of their officer, and Belcore stepping forward to meet them asks what they want? They deliver a dispatch which has just come; when the sergeant has duly read it, he announces that they must change their quarters on the morrow, an order which is unwelcome to the soldiers and peasant girls,—as well as to Belcore,—and which Nemorino fancies is displeasing to Adina also.

However, military orders admit of no change or delay, so Belcore presses Adina to consent to an immediate marriage. At these words, Nemorino shows signs of great discomposure, and Adina, wishing to drive him to distraction, suddenly expresses her readiness to fall in with the sergeant's wishes. She has no sooner spoken, however, than Nemorino interferes,

imploring her to wait at least until the morrow, an intervention which Belcore resents so sorely that he offers to fight the young peasant.

Fearing for the safety of Nemorino, Adina now intercedes in his behalf, explaining that he is a silly peasant, half mad with passion and drink, whom she will duly punish for his impudence. Meantime, soldiers and peasants express their amusement at the idea of a peasant attempting to oppose an officer, who would soon dispose of his rival should it ever come to a fight between them! Adina next succeeds in diverting Belcore's attention, by advising him to send immediately for a notary to draw up their marriage contract, while Nemorino calls in despair for the doctor, imploring his aid or all will be lost.

When Adina sees how badly her lover feels, she rejoices openly, and hoping to enhance the effect of her revenge, invites peasants and soldiers to a ball and banquet at her house, just before the wedding. While Belcore gives vent to his delight at his coming happiness, poor Nemorino utters a heart-broken wail, thinking his hopes have all been blasted; but Adina goes out coquetting with her soldier lover, and he is merely jeered at by the peasants.

The second act opens in Adina's farm.

Around a table lavishly spread, Adina, Belcore, Dulcamara and Gianetta are seated, while groups of peasants stand all around, drinking and singing. The scene opens with a merry chorus, in which the guests wish the betrothed all happiness, noisily drinking to their health. While Belcore responds to this toast, Adina comments on Nemorino's absence, for her triumph has no charms as long as he is not there to witness it.

Meantime, excited by numerous potations, Dulcamara offers to entertain the company by a song, inviting Adina to sing with him, for it is arranged for two voices. He then draws out of his pocket some music, wherein a rich man offers to lay his gold at a peasant girl's feet, if she will only forget her gondolier lover and become his wife. The girl replies that her hand must go with her heart, and the chorus noisily cheer Dulcamara as a fine singer, a compliment which he receives with the utmost fatuousness, declaring he is indeed, master in every art.

Just then the notary is welcomed by Belcore and the chorus, as well as by Dulcamara, who pompously hails him "Physician of Love" and "Apothecary of Hymen." Adina, whose eyes are often turned towards the door, now remarks in an aside that the notary has come, but

that Nemorino is still absent. Her soldier lover perceives that something has vexed her, but she turns aside his suspicions, and again expresses a secret wish for Nemorino's presence, ere the chorus repeat their toast, and file out, leaving Dulcamara alone on the stage.

Evidently, the doctor considers the banquet the best part of the wedding, for without waiting for further invitation, he begins to enjoy the good things set before him. While he is thus occupied, Nemorino strays abstractedly on the scene, declaring that since the notary has come, all hope is lost, and his heart broken!

By humming the refrain of the song he has just sung with Adina, Dulcamara attracts the attention of the young peasant, who tells the doctor he is in despair, and must in some way contrive to win Adina's affections this very day, or all will be lost. The doctor, thinking he has to deal with a madman, yet hoping to soothe him, suggests a second bottle of the "Elixir," assuring him gravely that repeated doses will have the desired effect. Still, he cautions him to make haste and secure the remedy, for his departure is fixed half an hour hence, when all chance of purchasing more will be lost. Hearing this, Nemorino clamors for the potion, but as he can produce no money, Dulcamara re-

fuses to give it to him, assuring him, however, that he will hold a bottle in reserve, until the moment of departure, ready to deliver as soon as he can pay cash.

As Dulcamara goes out, Nemorino casts himself on a seat and gives way to despair. Just then, too, Belcore steps upon the scene, commenting on the fickleness of women, for Adina insists upon postponing their marriage until evening. Catching sight of Nemorino, he suddenly remembers that the youth has been his rival, and impudently inquires why he looks so woebegone? Nemorino confesses that his despair is caused by want of money, saying that if he only had twenty crowns, his happiness would be assured. Being a recruiting sergeant, Belcore promptly answers that such a sum is easily procured, saying he need but enlist, and the money will be given him as an earnest of his pay.

For a moment, Nemorino hesitates, thinking of the dangers of war and of the sorrow of leaving home, but as this is the only means of securing the "Elixir," and Adina's heart, he concludes to accept the offer. Meantime, Belcore expatiates on the delights of a soldier's existence, speaks of the drum and the flag, and assures the lad that soldiers have sweethearts

wherever they go. When Belcore produces the money and contract, Nemorino signs the latter with a cross, then, having secured the necessary cash, prepares to seek Dulcamara. Meantime, Belcore fatuously invites the peasant to take him as an example, assuring him he will soon rise in his profession and be an officer too, but Nemorino slyly remarks, that the gay captain little knows what motive drove him to accept his offer!

The fourth scene opens on a rustic courtyard, where Gianetta is busy with a number of peasant women. She is telling them a wonderful piece of news, which she has just heard, but which has not, as yet, become known abroad. This news is the sudden death of Nemorino's uncle, leaving him a large fortune, and thus making him the best catch in the village. The peasant girls all promise to keep the matter strictly secret, each one counting upon trying to win the youth, so as to secure this fortune for her own. Just then, they see Nemorino coming. He has purchased the second dose of "the Elixir of Love," and describes how he quaffed it, saying that the doctor promised all hearts will now beat at his approach, and all maidens seem eager to win him.

The peasant girls, seeing him in a livelier

mood than usual, and wishing to make the best of their chances, now crowd around him, courtesying to him, complimenting him on his good looks, his amiability, and manifold attractions, and trying to win his attentions in every way. Surprised and charmed, Nemorino attributes all these blandishments to the potent effect of the "Elixir," in which he now has unbounded confidence, for he is not aware of his uncle's decease.

While this scene is taking place, Adina and Dulcamara come upon the stage. The girl is amazed to behold the lad who once attracted no attention, surrounded by all the maids of the village; but Dulcamara,—who knows that Nemorino's uncle is dead, and who attributes their coquetry to the right cause,—declares that the poor fellow is likely to be torn to pieces by the efforts of these maidens to secure his favor.

Loudly assuring the doctor that his drug is most effective, Nemorino calls upon him to witness the results it has already produced, for all the girls are in love with him! This remark, and the conduct of the peasant girls, greatly anger Adina, who attempts in her turn to attract the youth. As she has never sought him before, but has on the contrary, always seemed to

avoid him, he takes this also as an effect of the "Elixir," and would willingly linger by her side, did not the peasant girls drag him off to take part in their ball.

Considering that her former lover has proved too willing a victim, Adina tartly remarks that he yields very contentedly to their persuasions, while Dulcamara, unable to lose a chance to praise himself or his wares, claims the credit for this state of affairs, explaining that he has bestowed upon the youth a potent drug of his own manufacture. When Adina betrays some skepticism, he haughtily inquires whether she is versed in the secrets of alchemy, and knows the power of Queen Isolde's "Elixir of Love"?

Thus reminded of the story she read, Adina questions the doctor until she discovers that he has sold a potion to Nemorino, who besought his aid to win the love of a cruel damsel. The voluble doctor even confides that the youth enlisted to obtain money enough to buy his drug! In a duet, Adina exults in the devotion of her discarded suitor, while Dulcamara thinks that she too may yet beseech him for some "Elixir," and congratulates himself upon the fact that his departure is so imminent, that he can effect his escape before the consequences of his trickery become unpleasant.

Wishing to make use of every opportunity to turn an honest penny, he offers to supply Adina with a dose which will enable *her* to secure the affections of all who gaze upon her. But the maiden assures him that her ambition does not extend beyond Nemorino, and that she needs no more potent means than a loving glance, or a kind word, to win him back to her side, and secure his affections forever. The doctor ruefully agrees with her that a loving girl knows more of Cupid's craft than any doctor, and confesses that he would willingly exchange his arts for hers.

The seventh scene opens with a solo from Nemorino, who describes Adina with tears in her eyes, and says that he now feels certain she loves him. For the pleasure of holding her once in his arms, and feeling her heart beat against his, he is willing to sacrifice his future prospects. He has just finished this song, when he perceives Adina coming, and admonishes himself to seem indifferent until she betrays her real feelings.

As the girl comes upon the scene, she challenges her lover, who boastfully claims that all the girls want to marry him, says that he does not know which to choose, and suddenly asks her advice. She inquires why he is leaving

home, and what has induced him to enlist? He retorts that he is weary of idleness, and would fain be doing something, whereupon she confesses that his life is so dear to her, that she has just redeemed the fatal contract from Sergeant Belcore.

Nemorino thinks it another effect of the "Elixir" when Adina urges him to accept the paper, telling him he owes her his freedom. She also suggests that he should now choose a wise companion, and settle down in the midst of his people. The simple lad thinks that a little more feigned indifference will force Adina to reveal her true sentiments, when she suddenly hands him the contract and bids him farewell. Wistfully he inquires whether she has nothing more to say to him, and seeing her remain silent, angrily gives back the contract, vowing he is determined to die in war, for the doctor has cheated him, and in spite of all his sacrifices, he has not been able to win her love! Then, relenting, Adina informs him that the doctor has not been so bad a prophet after all, and that if he will only stay, her joy will be inexpressible. This happy conclusion fills Nemorino's heart with such joy, that he rapturously throws himself at Adina's feet.

In the last scene, Belcore, mustering his

troops, suddenly sees Adina advance arm in arm with Nemorino. He soon notices that a change has taken place, and when she announces that she has just been married, jauntily offers to present arms to his happy rival. Then he comforts himself with the thought that although he has been jilted, there are plenty more girls in the world, adding that he can take his pick among them, while Dulcamara encourages him by offering him some of his famous "Elixir." Just then, Nemorino advances to thank the doctor, who informs the spectators that this youth is now the richest man in the village, his uncle being dead. This is news only for Adina and Nemorino, Gianetta and the chorus being fully aware of the fact, but Dulcamara boastfully claims that Nemorino's success in love and accession to wealth are both due to the potency of his drug.

Then, having secured a hearing, he again begins to extol his wares, declaring they will correct every imperfection, give beauty to the homely, straighten the crooked, cause the lame to run like the wind, make the hunchback straight, and do away with all tumors, swellings, or other diseases. Once more he rouses the enthusiasm of the chorus, so that many peasants press forward to secure this magic remedy

before it is too late. While they are eagerly crowding around him, the doctor's carriage appears on the scene, and he drives away, after disposing of more of his wares, giving a parting blessing to all the spectators, and assuring them that the "Elixir" he leaves behind him will prevent their ever forgetting the immortal Dulcamara.

Amid the cheers of the chorus,—who pronounce him the phoenix of doctors,—Dulcamara rides away, while Nemorino and Adina confess that they owe a great deal to him, and Belcore denounces him as an accursed mountebank, who has blasted his hopes. The opera closes with cheers from the chorus, inviting Dulcamara to visit them soon again, bringing with him more of the priceless "Elixir of Love."

ROMEO AND JULIET

THE most popular of the many librettos based upon this Shakespeare tragedy was written by Barbier and Carré, and set to music by Gounod. Given in Paris for the first time in 1867, it is now known wherever operas are sung, and is always well received.

The scene is laid in Verona, in the halls of the Capulets, where a masked ball is in full swing. As the curtain rises, a chorus admonishes all present to gather roses while they may, for the hours of pleasure are all too fleeting and will soon be gone. Male voices then take up the strain, lauding love, which, like a beacon, leads them on. They are answered by a chorus of women, who sing of the balmy Italian nights, when every heart is attuned to love.

Once more the general chorus is heard, while Tybalt and Paris come upon the scene, mask in hand. These two young men exchange comments on the splendor of the feast, and the beauty of the women assembled. Among them all, however, Tybalt opines that

Paris can find none to compare with Juliet, his promised bride. The young man expresses great eagerness to see and have this maiden for his own, and as he concludes, Tybalt points out Capulet, drawing near them with his fair daughter. As the nobleman advances, he graciously welcomes his guests, announcing that he has summoned them to present his fifteen year old daughter, Juliet, whom he bids them receive kindly.

His introduction and plea are scarcely necessary; no sooner has he ceased speaking, than a chorus of praise rises from all sides, the men comparing Juliet to dawn and April, and the women extolling her grace and loveliness, which are fully equal to her beauty. They have barely finished their chorus of praise, when dance music is heard, a sound which fills the girl's heart with rapture, for this is her first appearance in public, and she anticipates much pleasure.

Becoming aware of Paris, Capulet bids him step forward and invite Juliet to dance. Seeing the young man mute and motionless, he wonders what such conduct may mean, but is reassured and amused by Paris' breathless remark that the maiden charms him. While Juliet is conversing with this suitor and Tybalt,

old Capulet encourages men and maidens to dance, bidding them choose the partners they like best, and laughingly vowing that any fair lady who refuses to tread a measure will be open to the suspicion of suffering from corns! His merry invitation meets a quick response from the chorus, and in a few moments all his guests move off in pairs towards the ballroom.

Juliet and Paris have gone with the rest, when new masks come upon the scene. They are of the Montague faction, which a hereditary feud has long opposed to the Capulets. Naturally, they have not been invited, but have ventured into the house through bravado. Mercutio, one of the newcomers, seeing they are alone, wishes to remove his mask for a moment, but his friend Romeo checks him, saying it will be well for them to leave ere they are discovered and rouse the Capulets' anger.

Flight, however advisable, is most distasteful to Mercutio, who boldly declares that having brought a sword with him, he is ready to meet any one who ventures to question his right to be there. His aggressive attitude pleases all save Romeo, who again seeks to lead his friends away, pretexting an ominous dream which still haunts him. But Mercutio slyly suggests that Queen Mab may have visited him in his sleep,

and when Romeo asks an explanation of these mysterious words, sings a merry ballad of the fairy queen, wherein he describes her methods and antics, as well as her nutshell chariot, drawn by gnats, whose harness is made from finest cobwebs. This queen drives recklessly over the faces of sleepers, whispering deceptive words in their ears, or deluding them with splendid visions.

Romeo impatiently answers that whether the warning came from Queen Mab or from any other good or bad spirit, it should be heeded, for his heart has been oppressed all day by dark presentiments. But Mercutio mischievously inquires whether all this uneasiness may not be due to disappointment at not finding his latest flame, Rosalina, among the dancers? Then he offers to show Romeo women who far surpass her in beauty, but even while he is speaking this, Romeo beholds Juliet, and struck by her appearance declares "so shows a snowy dove trooping with crows, as yonder lady o'er her fellows shows."

Mercutio now interposes some rather uncomplimentary remarks about Juliet's companion, an old nurse, who makes a good foil for her, but Romeo is too wrapt in admiration to heed him, and raves on that he never beheld such

beauty before, and that for the first time in his life he really loves. His friends, delighted that his infatuation for Rosalina's should end, welcome this new love with joy, while Mercutio draws him off to one side.

Juliet now turns to her nurse, inquiring why she has thus called her apart, but wins from the old woman only a confused statement that her back aches, that the countess wants her, and last, but not least, that perhaps she would like to see her bridegroom, Paris, a proper man who will make her a good husband. Juliet laughingly answers that she has given no thought to her wedding, although the old nurse vows that she was married even younger. This attendant's questions evidently trouble her, for Juliet soon abandons herself to a vague day-dream she has been cherishing for some time past, which fills her heart with nameless joy. It is a maiden's dream of love of which she sings, until the servant Gregory comes in quest of the nurse, who is needed to keep a watchful eye over the other servants. Romeo detains Gregory to ask the lady's name, and the man, thinking he means the nurse, answers perfunctorily ere he calls her away. Juliet is about to follow the servants out of the room, when Romeo steps forward, craving her pardon if he, a mere

mortal, dare approach an angel, and gently kisses her hand. Flattered by his courtesy, Juliet replies that since he is a pilgrim,—as his garb proclaims,—he should know that “palm to palm is holy palmer’s kiss.”

When Romeo insinuates that saints have rosy lips, Juliet retorts that they were framed for prayer, an answer which in no wise deters the bold suitor, who after some fencing of wit, gently kisses her. When Juliet exclaims that she has sinned in accepting such a caress, Romeo eagerly offers to take it back. She, however, now refuses to yield to his entreaties, which are finally interrupted by the entrance of Tybalt.

Promptly resuming his discarded mask, Romeo asks who this intruder may be, and learning his name and relationship to the lady with whom he is talking, is horrified to discover that Juliet is the daughter of his hereditary foe, Capulet. Meantime, Tybalt invites Juliet to rejoin the merrymakers, asking in an undertone the name of the pilgrim, who donned a mask so hastily at his approach. After briefly replying that she cannot tell, Juliet allows herself to be led aside by her cousin, whom Romeo greets politely as he leaves the room.

The sound of the stranger’s voice reveals that

it is Romeo, a Montague, but while Juliet dreamily repeats the name she hears for the first time, Tybalt hotly registers a vow to pursue and slay this foe. In his haste, he leaves Juliet, who now laments that her heart should have been awakened for the man whom she should hate, but she vows that since she cannot marry the one she loves, the tomb shall be her nuptial couch.

Meantime, Tybalt has joined Paris, and is eagerly pointing out the intruder. Tybalt is about to challenge him, when he perceives Juliet's father, to whom he also imparts his discovery. While these men are talking, Romeo, in an aside, grieves that he should be an object of horror to Juliet, and that he should have fallen in love with the daughter of Capulet. This mournful soliloquy is interrupted by Mercutio's low warning that trouble is brewing, and that it behooves them to be on their guard. Only then Romeo perceives that Tybalt is preparing to address him, and hears Capulet politely detain some guests whom he invites to supper. The subdued threats of Tybalt, the cautions of Mercutio, and the cordial invitation of Capulet, form a harmonious accompaniment to the chorus of merrymakers, still bent on extracting all the pleasure they can from this fête.

When Mercutio gently draws Romeo away,

Tybalt pursues them, inviting his friends to follow and hear him challenge the intruder. But Capulet restrains him, vowing their festivities shall not be marred by any tragedy, and that it makes no difference who the stranger may be or what name he bears. Then, turning once more to his guests, the old nobleman again invites them to enjoy the dancing, which they cheerfully agree will soon banish all thought save that of pleasure.

The second act opens in Capulet's garden, directly under Juliet's balcony. It is night, and Romeo and his page are seen scaling the wall by means of a rope-ladder. As soon as an entrance has been effected, the page withdraws with the ladder, leaving Romeo alone in the garden, fervently praying that the shades of night may conceal him. Just then he hears the voice of Mercutio, on the other side of the wall, loudly calling him, but declares he will not answer that scoffer, who, never having felt the pangs of love, cannot even imagine how acutely he suffers. Mercutio, Benvolio and the chorus now proclaim that Romeo was last seen vanishing in this direction, and that as he does not answer, it is only too evident that he has some tender assignation on hand, and does not wish to be disturbed.

When they have gone, Romeo confesses that love has led him thither; then, seeing a light appear in Juliet's window, he hails it in a beautiful cavatina, as the fairest orb in the sky, which has come to scatter the shadows which darken his soul. Next he pictures Juliet loosening her hair, and wishes that she would come to the window so he could behold her.

He has barely finished, when Juliet, deeming herself alone, appears on her balcony. Musing over what has just occurred, she declares that she cannot hate Romeo, although she wishes he were called by any other name. In her solitude she reveals the fact that she loves him, a statement which Romeo can scarcely credit, but which he eagerly begs her to repeat. This voice, coming from the garden which she thought deserted, startles Juliet, who timidly inquires who is there, spying upon her, and discovering her secrets.

Romeo now steps forward, saying he cannot give his name, although he would fain do so. When Juliet answers that she knows he is Romeo, he assures her that he has renounced forever a name which was that of her foe, and that henceforth he will be known only by some appellation agreeable to his lady-love.

His fervor kindles Juliet's blushes, which, she

informs him, would be apparent were it not for the darkness. Still she confesses that his words are very welcome, and soon betrays great anxiety to ascertain whether he truly loves her. When Romeo would fain answer, she bids him not swear "by the inconstant moon," but speak plainly, words which she can understand and believe. Then, she will no longer deny her love,—which he has already discovered,—unless he prefers her to be coy and hard to win, in which case she would also try to please him. Still, she adds, that such arts are foreign to her nature, and that although quickly won, he will find her faithful to the end.

Romeo has just begun a reply to this recitative, which has filled his heart with rapture, when a noise is heard. Listening attentively, Juliet whispers that the alarm has been given and that he must flee. While he vanishes in the darkness, she leaves her balcony, and a few moments later, Gregory and others come into the garden with lanterns and staves. Peering right and left, the chorus declare that there is no trace of the intruders, and that the insolent page has evidently vanished. Their noise, however, brings Juliet's nurse to the window, and when she inquires the cause of the commotion, Gregory curtly informs her that a page of the hated

Montagues has insulted them by forcing his way into their very precincts.

As the nurse seems somewhat incredulous, Gregory informs her that under the cover of a mask, a Montague has even ventured to appear at their feast, and when she wonders what can have enticed him thither, ironically suggests that he has probably been attracted by her great beauty. The easily gulled nurse, not only believes this, but virtuously declares that should the wretch approach her, she will promptly deliver him over to their tender mercies, a promise which Gregory and the chorus receive with such mock gratitude, that it finally rouses the nurse's suspicions and anger.

She is angrily muttering blessings on the stick which will punish those knaves, when Juliet appears beside her, asking who is there? Thus reminded of her nursling's presence, and of the advanced hour, the nurse vows it is high time all were abed, and goes back into the room.

Just as they vanish, Romeo returns, singing that he cannot wait until morning for confirmation of a dream so sweet that it charms his heart. As he concludes this song, Juliet reappears on the balcony. In answer to his softly breathed name, he bids her speak, and she informs him that before she rests, she must know

whether he shares her love and wishes to marry her? If he does, he need but send her a message on the morrow, when she will join him wherever and whenever he pleases, and then being united to him in wedlock, will forget family, friends and hereditary feud, to belong to him only and forever. But, if his love is mere feigning, she implores him to cease his wooing, leaving her to the anguish which will surely shorten her life.

Humbly kneeling, as to a saint, Romeo swears he adores her, that she is all in all to him, and can dispose of his life as she will; that once she is his, he will have tasted the joys of heaven. These passionate declarations are interrupted by a call from the nurse within, so Juliet whispers that she must go. But her lover detains her, until the call is repeated and Juliet again bids him begone. Before he obeys, however, they exchange farewells, in a duet of great beauty, and when Romeo tears himself away, Juliet calls him back, loath to have him leave, and confessing that "parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good-night till it be morrow."

Still, even lovers' partings must come to an end, so after a last embrace Juliet vanishes into the house, while Romeo, left alone in the

garden, wishes her a tender good-night, hoping that even in her dreams she will hear his voice whispering of love, and feel the kiss he would fain press upon her ruby lips.

The third act opens in Friar Lawrence's cell, where Romeo, entering at dawn, finds the monk still at his devotions. Shrewdly suspecting the reason for this early call, Friar Lawrence asks whether his is not an errand of love, and when Romeo acquiesces, demands rather impatiently whether he is still thinking of Rosalina? That episode already seems so remote to Romeo, that the name actually seems unfamiliar, so he hastens to assure the friar that it is impossible to have a thought to spare for Rosalina when his heart is full of Juliet.

At this name the friar starts, for he deems it impossible that the young man should really love the daughter of his foe; still, before he can ask any questions, Juliet herself appears, and the almost wordless meeting of the lovers leaves him no doubt about their love for one another. Turning to the friar, Juliet then informs him that they have come thither to be married, and entreats him to give them his blessing. In the union of these children of enmical houses, the friar sees a chance of ending a long standing feud, so he gladly consents to do as she

wishes, while Romeo sends the nurse outside to wait for her mistress.

After a few solemn words, the friar bids the young folks kneel, and begins an invocation to the power who breathed life into inanimate clay, calling down a blessing upon the young couple before him. This prayer ended, friar and lovers unite in a trio, wherein Romeo and Juliet promise to obey the Lord, and pray for His aid and blessing, while Lawrence intercedes for them, begging heaven to vouchsafe them a long life of love and happiness, and to guide their feet along the narrow way of truth and virtue.

Then, vows having been exchanged and rings placed upon their fingers, the friar blesses them, the nurse reenters, and all four voices blend in a chorus of solemn thanksgiving, ere the newly married lovers part, Juliet returning home with her nurse, while Romeo remains in the cell.

The next scene is played in one of the streets of Verona, where Romeo's page wanders aimlessly, seeking his master, whom he has not seen since he left him in the garden of the Capulets. Idleness has ever been provocative of mischief; so the page, having nothing else to do, and finding himself opposite the Capulets' dwelling, indulges in a suggestive song about

a dove and kites, in hopes of luring some of the servants out into the street, so they can renew their long-standing quarrel.

The mischievous page is not mistaken in his calculations, for Capulet's servants soon troop out, headed by Gregory. Stephano hails their arrival with glee, but Gregory is furiously angry to be thus disturbed a second time. While the page in mock surprise, marvels that they do not like his song, Gregory recognizes in him the rascal whom they nearly seized the night before. The others also identify him, but Stephano paying no heed to their comments, jauntily continues his song, wherein he declares that unless they guard her well, their dove will soon fly away.

His insolent tone rouses Gregory's anger, and makes him hotly inquire whether the page is singing thus to provoke them? Stephano carelessly replies that he is rather fond of music, but when Gregory suggests that serenaders sometimes find themselves dismissed with broken guitars, coolly replies that his favorite instrument happens to be the sword, which he is quite ready to use. This answer acts like a spark in a train of powder, for Gregory immediately draws his weapon and places himself opposite Stephano, while the rest form a circle around

them, joyfully hailing the prospect of a duel, which is highly entertaining to the spectators, and of which they do not doubt the outcome, seeing their champion is an experienced soldier, while his opponent is a mere boy.

This unequal duel has just begun, when Romeo's two friends appear upon the scene. After an indignant exclamation that it is a deed worthy of the Capulets to attack a child, Mercutio draws his sword. But Paris and Tybalt, having come up on their side, challenge these gentlemen to cross weapons with them. All have just begun fencing, when Romeo appears and implores them suspend their fight. Eager to encounter Romeo himself, Tybalt postpones his quarrel with Mercutio, to challenge the newcomer, whom he calls a spy because he came uninvited to the masked ball, where he even ventured to address Juliet. Romeo, who has drawn his sword, promptly sheathes it on hearing this name, gravely assuring Tybalt that he is no villain, and that instead of hating him, they have good reason for loving him, as time will reveal.

Having thus spoken, Romeo would fain withdraw, in spite of Tybalt's taunts, which so infuriate Mercutio that he undertakes to avenge the affront which his friend seems not to resent.

In vain Romeo tries to check him, Mercutio evades his grasp, and rushing to meet Tybalt, crosses swords with him. While they fight, and Romeo implores them to desist, the double chorus of Montague and Capulet retainers take up the strain with which they are wont to egg each other on. Romeo has just rushed between the combatants to end the struggle by force, when Tybalt's sword, thrust under his arm, strikes Mercutio, who sinks to the ground, gasping that he is wounded to death. He also curses his opponent, and reproaches Romeo for his untimely intervention.

Grief-stricken, Romeo calls for a doctor, and tries to support Mercutio, who is half led, half carried off by his retainers. Then, bidding farewell to prudence and every other consideration, Romeo draws his sword to avenge his friend. While he and Tybalt fight,—exchanging only a few brief calls such as duelists are wont to use,—the spectators resume their noisy chorus. As the duel draws to an end, Romeo, by a lucky feint, succeeds in wounding Tybalt, who falls back into the arms of Capulet, attracted hither by the noise.

While Capulet bends over his kinsman with an exclamation of horror, Benvolio hastily informs Romeo that Tybalt's wound is mortal,

and that it behooves him to escape while he can. Romeo declares it is impossible for him to flee, and when Benvolio assures him that it is sure death to remain, expresses his readiness to brave it. The two friends are engaged in this brief dialogue while Capulet listens to Tybalt's dying words, and solemnly swears to fulfil his last request.

It is at this moment that the Duke comes upon the scene, to be greeted by loud cries from both factions, clamoring for vengeance and justice. Then Capulet, pointing to the lifeless Tybalt, accuses Romeo, who, in excuse, explains that he merely avenged Mercutio, traitorously slain. The vociferous cries of the Montagues and Capulets are silenced by the Duke's declaration that he is weary of these constant brawls. He adds that Tybalt has already paid the penalty for his sin, but that Romeo is sentenced to banishment, a decree which cuts the young man to the heart. He also sternly declares that should Romeo be found within the wall of Verona after dark, he will be treated as an outlaw, no one but himself being to blame for any evil which may befall him.

As the Duke goes away with his suite, Romeo despairingly cries that although he risk

his life by remaining, he must see Juliet once more before he goes off into exile.

The fourth act reveals Juliet's room at night. The young bride is lying on a couch, with Romeo kneeling beside her. He has evidently confessed all his sins, for Juliet softly tells him she forgives him for killing a kinsman, who, had he lived, would perchance have slain the man she loves, but whom all her people hate.

Never weary of hearing that she loves him, Romeo implores her to say so again, and then the two join in a duet in praise of this night, vowing heaven can offer no greater bliss than they enjoy.

The night has sped all too quickly, however, and the first gleams of dawn admonish Romeo to depart. Juliet gently seeks to detain him, and when he bids her listen to the first strains of the lark, assures him that he is mistaken, for that it is the voice of a nightingale singing to its mate. The duet between the lovers ended, Romeo, overcome by her pleading, vows that he will remain with her, even though death awaits him. At these words, fearful for his safety, Juliet, urges him to leave. Their parts have now completely changed, for he is reluctant, while she insists, until she prevails

upon him to go, after a lingering parting duet.

Juliet watches Romeo descend from the balcony, and when he has vanished, intrusts him to the keeping of the angels, whom she implores to watch over him. She is still dreaming of Romeo when her nurse comes in, exclaiming that it is well her husband has gone, for her father is about to enter with the friar. This news startles Juliet, for she dreads lest her secret be discovered ; still, she hurriedly composes herself to receive her father, who pompously announces that Tybalt's death has reminded him of the uncertainty of life, and of the need of providing his daughter with a protector. He has therefore determined not to wait any longer, but to celebrate her marriage this very day, adding that he is glad to see no further traces of the extravagant grief she displayed on first learning of the death of her cousin.

When Juliet abruptly inquires whom she is to wed, her father answers it is Paris ; but when she would fain protest, and utters an exclamation of dismay, both the friar and nurse secretly admonish her to keep silent. Blind to her emotion, Capulet goes on to express regret for Tybalt's untimely end, and relief at

settling his child's future so satisfactorily. Then, after all four actors have indulged in brief asides, Capulet goes out with the nurse, leaving the friar to prepare Juliet for the ceremony which is to take place without further delay.

Alone with the monk, Juliet exclaims that she has concealed her utter despair in obedience to his signals, but that unless he come to her rescue, no alternative will remain for her, save to use the dagger she draws from her bosom, and end her perplexities with her life.

The friar inquires whether death has no terrors for one so young, and learning that it seems far preferable to dishonor, draws a vial from his bosom, telling her it contains a potion, which, if she will only drink it, will make her appear dead for forty-two hours, at the end of which she will revive and feel no ill-effects from its use. In a few graphic words Lawrence describes the sensation which her sudden death will create in the city, her obsequies, and her place in the family vault, where, he assures her, her husband will watch over her slumbers, ready to flee with her as soon as she awakes.

Impelled by love, Juliet vows she will drink the potion, trusting to the friar's promise that it will not harm her and that he will notify Romeo

With a murmured "to-morrow," Lawrence then leaves the room, and music is heard announcing that Capulet, Paris, and sundry others, are coming in quest of the bride.

Taking Juliet's hand, Capulet places it in that of Paris, promising she will be happy with the husband of his choice, but when the bridegroom attempts to slip a ring on her finger, Juliet quickly withdraws her hand, dreamily repeating her former statement that "her only love has sprung from her only hate, and that the grave shall be her wedding-bed." Then, still as if in a trance, she removes her bridal wreath, loosens her hair, and when her father tries to lead her away, totters and falls, exclaiming that all is dark, and death near! Capulet catches her in his arms when she sinks uttering a brief farewell, and tragically exclaims that she is dead, a cry caught up by all the spectators as the fourth act ends.

The fifth act is played in the vault of the Capulets, where the silence is broken by the sound of a crowbar, forcing open a fast closed door. A moment later, Romeo appears, hailing this dreary spot as the dearest place on earth, for it contains Juliet, his beloved. Looking around him, her perceives her lying in state, and rushes towards her. But, unable to distinguish

her features clearly, he raises the lamp he holds, to peruse a countenance which has lost none of its charm, although it is as colorless and set as marble. Romeo vows that death itself must be in love with such perfection, and says that he will remain there, mounting guard over his beloved, so that none may steal her from him. Not to be parted from the wife, whom he deems dead—for the friar's message has miscarried—Romeo has decided to die too, so after a last look and embrace, he takes a vial of poison from his pocket, and raising it to his lips, pledges Juliet in it.

He has barely swallowed the potion, when the girl begins to come out of her lethargy, dreamily inquiring where she is? At first Romeo cannot believe the evidence of his senses, but soon discerns a faint warmth in her hand, and while he is anxiously feeling whether her heart still beats, Juliet opens her eyes, gazes around, and, to his amazement, rises, and calls him by name.

Romeo is uttering a breathless aside, when Juliet says that even in her dreams she heard the voice of her beloved, and awoke thinking he was near. At these words Romeo can no longer contain himself, but rushing towards her, embraces her, rapturously declaring he is ready

to die, since his love has been able to recall her to life.

When their first moment of bliss is over, Romeo seeks to draw Juliet away, telling her the world is now before them, in which to seek happiness together. But just as they are about to leave, the poison he has swallowed begins to take effect, and he totters, exclaiming against the cruelty of fate. His wild words, and sudden faintness, alarm Juliet ; and Romeo assures her her fears are more than justified, for, owing to the cruelty of their parents, death is meeting them on the threshold of life and love.

Mistaking these words for delirium, Juliet tries to recall him to his senses, until he confesses, in broken accents, that a while ago, deeming her dead as she appeared, he had taken a dose of poison. When he shows her the empty vial, Juliet, understanding that all is over, frantically embraces her husband, who, forgetting his own sufferings, bids her not grieve for him, for, upheld by love, he feels as if he is being translated. Then, growing weaker and weaker, he no longer heeds her grief, but imagining himself once more in the nuptial chamber, dreamily tells her it is the lark he hears, and that in spite of her pleading he must tear himself away. In an

attempt to rise, he slips out of her clasp to the steps of the bier, where he lies almost inert, while she, wildly groping for the vial, ascertains that he has drained it to the dregs leaving not a single drop for her use. In her despair, she flings the vial away, and suddenly remembering her dagger, declares it will prove the medium to unite their souls. As Juliet stabs herself and falls, Romeo, by a supreme effort, catches her in his arms, and holds her fast, while they exchange a last embrace, and die in each other's arms, imploring the forgiveness of heaven.

I PAGLIACCI

THE opera of Punchinello, or *I Pagliacci*, first given in 1892, is written by Leoncavallo, who is author of both score and libretto. He tells us that this opera is based upon an event in real life, and opens the play with a prologue, in which one of the characters (the clown) informs the spectators that truth is stranger than fiction, and that they are about to witness a village tragedy in all its homely details. Having finished this speech, the clown calls for the curtain, which rises upon a first act, representing a Sicilian village, where a traveling circus has just been erected.

The real play begins with trumpet calls, and the roll of a drum accompanied by loud cheers and by the joyful cries of children. Attracted by all this hubbub, peasants of both sexes, in holiday attire, come from all sides, and gaze fixedly in the direction whence the music is heard. Tonio, the clown, joins them, but annoyed by the crowd's comments on his queer costume, he soon draws aside, and lies

down in the shade of the booth, to await the coming of the rest of the troupe.

The peasants, in chorus, sing that Punchinello is coming to amuse them with his jokes and pranks, he alone keeping a straight face in the midst of the wildest fun. In fact, it is he who is now beating the big drum, to the delight of the village boys, who serve as his escort and cheer him lustily.

Behind the scene, these urchins are heard urging Peppe, the Harlequin, to whip up his donkey, a sorry animal which now appears, drawing the gaudy circus cart in which the principal actor and his wife are enthroned. The boys annoy the players, and while Canio, or Punchinello, hurls curses at them, Harlequin strikes the most impudent with his whip. Nedda, the Columbine, reclines in a picturesquely draped cart. She wears a gay costume, and directly behind her stands the big drum, which her husband Canio beats frantically, stopping from time to time to blow the trumpet which he holds in his other hand.

These strolling players are old favorites, so the crowd welcomes them with noisy demonstrations of joy, which Canio graciously acknowledges. When asked at what time the show will begin, he loudly beats his drum to secure undi-

vided attention, and then, with mock courtesy, begs permission to announce that their grand representation will take place at seven o'clock, when all are expected to attend. He promises an exhibition of the matrimonial sorrows of Punchinello, and of the vengeance he executes on a traitor, predicts plenty of fun with the clown, and concludes by repeating that one and all are cordially invited.

The villagers volunteer to be on hand in good time, and as the cart comes to a standstill, the clown (Tonio) steps forward to help Nedda down. He is not allowed to do so, however, for Canio, who has already alighted, roughly thrusts him aside, and taking his wife by the arms, gently sets her on the ground. The women are amused by the discomfiture of Tonio, who takes his revenge by showing his fist to the boys, who run away grumbling right and left. As they disappear, and Peppe leads the donkey-cart off the stage, Tonio snarls that Canio will yet pay dear for that insult.

One of the principal villagers, stepping forward, now offers to treat the players at the village inn. Canio has just accepted, when Peppe turns volunteering to join them as soon as he has changed his clothes. When asked if he will come too, the clown replies from behind the

scene, that he is busy cleaning the donkey, and will therefore appear only later.

One of the spectators jocosely remarks that the clown evidently wishes to be left behind, so as to continue his attentions to Nedda. Although Canio smiles constrainedly at this jest, he remarks with a frown that such a game would hardly be worth playing either for Tonio or any one else! Life and the theatre are two very different matters, in his opinion, and while Punchinello may catch his wife with a lover, and allow himself to be hoodwinked for the amusement of the public, it would be far more serious should Nedda ever undertake to deceive her husband.

These remarks are overheard by his wife, who, troubled by a bad conscience, declares in an aside that she wonders what he means. The peasants curiously inquire why Canio should take the matter so tragically, a fact which he immediately denies, assuring them that he adores his wife, whom he even kisses in their presence to prove his devotion.

As Canio turns away, bagpipes are heard, and the villagers rush off to the left, the boys exclaiming that the pipers are coming to lead the Assumption procession. In the distance, church bells begin to ring, for it is now the vesper

hour, and the old men and matrons prepare for the service. Canio again reminds them that when their devotions are over, he will expect them to witness his play, as the pipers march in, dressed in gay colors, with ribbons flying. They are followed by a troop of villagers, who, after joining in the chorus, scatter in different directions, most of them wending their way towards the church, where the old people expect to keep close watch over the young, so as to prevent any untimely flirtations.

While the chorus is lustily singing, Canio, behind the scene, doffs his Punchinello costume, and comes back, after having exchanged farewells with his wife. Joined by Peppe, and five or six villagers, he then goes off.

Left alone on the stage, Nedda audibly wonders why her husband looked at her so suspiciously, and whether he can have any inkling that she is not faithful? She dreads his discovering that she has fallen in love with another man, for she knows that he is hot tempered, and fears his brutality. Still, she tries to reassure herself, declaring she is foolishly apprehensive, and that on such a beautiful day as this, one should think of nothing but love.

Gazing upward into the August sky, she apostrophizes the birds, asking where they are

going and what they are seeking? Then, remembering that her mother,—a fortune-teller,—pretended to understand their language, she vainly wishes that she too had wings, and could fly away with them, through the golden clouds, to a strange land where she might be happy.

While Nedda is singing thus to herself, Tonio comes forward, and leaning against a tree, gazes upon her in admiration. Having finished her song, Nedda is about to pass into the booth, when she suddenly becomes aware of this unwelcome listener, and testily inquires why he is not at the inn with the rest? Tonio replies that he knows full well he has always been an object of derision, but that nevertheless he has a heart, which beats for her only, and that she cannot imagine how much he suffers from her indifference. Drawing near, he next implores her to listen to him, but she answers that she has heard the story of his love before, and that it will be time enough to repeat it in the evening, when as usual, he takes the part of lover in their play.

Again Tonio passionately expresses his longing to make her his own, whereat Nedda replies that he evidently is aching for a drubbing, and that she will call her husband to administer it. These remarks so infuriate the clown, that

he rushes forward, swearing that he will kiss her first. In drawing back from this proffered embrace, Nedda becomes aware of the fact that Peppe's whip is within reach; seizing it quickly, she cuts Tonio across the face, denouncing him as a base wretch. With a cry of pain Tonio draws back, but as he goes off the stage, he again swears he will be avenged, while Nedda comments that his soul must be as deformed as his body!

The third scene opens on the self-same spot. Silvio, the lover of Nedda, is leaning over the wall, calling in low tones to attract her attention. Hurrying towards him, Nedda exclaims that his coming thus, in the middle of the day, is the height of imprudence; but Silvio gently assures her that there is no risk at all, for he has just seen Canio and Peppe in the tavern, drinking with their friends. He adds that he has come hither, by a way known to them alone, and that there is no possibility of his being discovered. Still unconvinced, Nedda objects that had he come one moment sooner, he would have been seen by Tonio. As Silvio scorns the clown, he laughs aloud, but Nedda informs him that the fool is not so harmless as he seems, for he loves her and has just been striving to kiss her by force.

Hearing this, Silvio waxes indignant, but Nedda assures him that she is quite able to protect herself, although on this occasion no other weapon than a whip had been necessary. Still apprehensive, Silvio begs her to end this state of affairs, telling her that as the feast will be over on the morrow, their troupe will leave, and that he will be in despair when they no longer see each other.

As Nedda shows some emotion, he urges that if it is true that she never loved Canio, and if she really abhors their roving life and is willing to share his quiet fate, she had better elope with him that very night. But Nedda implores him not to tempt her, declares that his suggestion is the height of folly, and that although she loves him dearly, it will be wiser for him to go, for fate is against them both and they must part.

While they are absorbed in this conversation, Tonio steals upon the scene. He overhears Silvio ask whether Nedda loves him, and sneaks away, determined to call the husband, and thus take his revenge.

Nedda is just assuring Silvio of her undying affection when Tonio flees down the path with a menacing gesture. The lover now uses such tender and persuasive arts to induce Nedda to join him, that she yields at last to his entreaties,

a surrender which fills his heart with joy. It is while the guilty lovers are still exchanging rapturous caresses, that Canio and Tonio appear on another part of the scene.

The lovers having made all their arrangements, Silvio vanishes over the wall, just as Tonio cautions Canio to tread lightly so as to surprise them. Stealing forward noiselessly, Canio overhears Silvio make a midnight appointment, which Nedda accepts, promising to be his forever, then, with a hoarse cry of jealous rage, the husband springs forward, too late to recognize his rival, but just in time to catch a glimpse of him, as he speeds out of sight, urged on by Nedda's cry to beware.

Roughly thrusting his wife aside when she seeks to detain him, Canio springs over the wall, and during the next few minutes his voice is heard here and there behind the scenes, hoarsely challenging his rival to show himself.

Meanwhile, Tonio feasts his eyes upon Nedda, who is listening with all her ears to discover the faintest sounds of altercation. She is anxiously breathing a prayer for her lover's safety, and it is only when she hears Tonio's laugh that she becomes aware of his presence, and of the mean part he has played. Turning upon him she then accuses him of having acted

the part of a coward, but the clown sarcastically assures her that what he has done is nothing to what he intends to do, for he has ceased to care whether she loves or hates him, and is only thinking of revenge.

Canio reappears, panting and wiping the perspiration from his brow. He says that he has again been baffled,—his rival being more familiar with the paths than he,—but that his wife must immediately reveal the name of her lover. Nedda pretends not to understand, until Canio draws a dagger from his belt, threatening to plunge it into her heart if she does not speak. Thus challenged, Nedda defiantly declares that in spite of all threats and insults, no word will ever pass her lips, and her husband's rage is about to culminate in a crime, when Peppe suddenly appears on the scene, wrenches the dagger out of his hand, flings it at a distance, and hastily inquires what all this means?

He adds that the villagers are already coming out of church, that it is almost time for their play to begin, and that he and Canio must hasten to don their costumes. In vain Canio struggles in his grasp, howling that he is determined to know that name of his wife's lover, Peppe and Tonio hold him fast. Then they bid Nedda prepare to take her part in the play,

reminding her of the fact that although Canio is violent tempered, his rages are soon over, and that by the time he is fully dressed, he will doubtless have recovered his senses.

As Nedda vanishes behind the curtains of the booth, Canio holds his head, groaning aloud that this is an infamous trick to play upon an innocent man. Stealing up to him, Tonio insinuates that if he feigns calmness, his wife's lover may yet reappear, and that in that case, he, Tonio, will help him take his revenge.

Anxious for the success of the play, Peppe once more urges Canio to dress, admonishes Tonio to beat the drum as loudly as possible so as to attract a large audience, and then goes away to don his own costume of Harlequin.

Left alone in the centre of the stage, Canio gives vent to a burst of despair, wondering how he can act a part when almost maddened with grief? But he bitterly reminds himself that he is Punchinello, who must play the fool whether his heart break or not, for people are determined to laugh. Even when they see Harlequin robbing him of his Columbine,—in the play,—they think it all a huge joke, although such a matter is grim tragedy for the poor husband.

The curtain of the first act falls slowly with the tragic conclusion of this speech, and Canio

goes off to dress for his part in spite of a breaking heart.

The second act opens on the same spot, showing the interior of the theatre also. Tonio comes forward with the big drum, which he beats frantically to attract the people, who now crowd on the scene from all sides, to take their places for the show. While Peppe places benches to seat the women, they begin a chorus, wherein they declare that first comers get the best places, and that if they sit far forward they will be most likely to see all that is going on. While Tonio keeps up his noisy invitations to enter, the men join in the chorus, remarking that the boys are making great ado, and that the girls have donned their brightest ribbons.

Among the spectators is Silvio, who takes his place near the front, greeting his friends right and left in a cordial manner. While the women are remonstrating about crowding and the heat, Nedda appears on the scene, carrying a plate, in which she collects the money of the spectators. While she passes from row to row, Tonio carries away the big drum, and soon the chorus of men and women clamor for the show to begin; meantime Nedda has a brief aside with Silvio, begging him to be cautious and let no one notice that he is speaking to her. Then, having finished

her rounds, she vanishes in the background, and the chorus resume their noisy calls, which they keep up until the curtain rises.

With the second scene, the stage play begins. Nedda, the Columbine, is sitting in a little room, by a table, near which stand two straw-bottom chairs. She seems uneasy, and remarks that as her husband is only coming home late that night, she wishes her lover would appear. Just as she finishes this sentence, the twanging of a guitar is heard without, and Columbine rushes to the window to listen to her stage lover, whose voice is heard behind the scenes, singing a serenade, wherein he implores his lady-love to open her window and admit him. Before answering, Columbine comes back to the front part of the scene, audibly wondering whether it is safe for her to make the agreed signal and let him join her.

While she is debating thus, one of the doors suddenly opens to admit Tonio, her servant, carrying a basket on his arm. He stops, and gazing at her rather tragically, exclaims for the benefit of the public that she is the most beautiful creature he has ever seen, and that he longs to tell her how dearly he loves her. He concludes that as her husband is away, the moment is propitious, and utters a long and amorous sigh,

which causes much amusement in the audience. Turning, Columbine shortly inquires what he is doing there, and they begin a conversation, which she soon interrupts to inquire whether he has brought the roast chicken she ordered?

Falling at her feet with his basket, Tonio declares that he and the chicken are both hers, adding that he longs to express his adoration. But, without heeding this outburst, Columbine goes to the window, makes a sign to her lover without, and coming back, snatches the basket from her kneeling servant, abruptly inquiring how much he paid for its contents?

She has just placed the chicken on the table, when Harlequin scales the window, carefully depositing on the floor the bottle of wine he has brought. Then he marches towards Tonio, who pretends not to see him, but assures Columbine with mock fervor that he knows she is as cold and chaste as snow, and that although she has never been willing to listen to his love, he cannot succeed in forgetting her.

Harlequin puts an end to this hypocritical speech by kicking him, a proceeding which elicits roars of laughter from the rustic spectators. Beating an undignified retreat, Tonio now comments,—for the public benefit,—that these two evidently understand and love each

other. In the doorway, however, he pauses once more to bestow upon them a burlesque benediction, which again causes much amusement.

When the servant has gone, Columbine and Harlequin greet each other effusively, and sitting down, prepare to enjoy a festive meal. Columbine claims the credit of having provided the finest chicken ever seen, while Harlequin vows that nectar is a poor draught compared to the wine which he has brought!

When they have exchanged sundry compliments, Harlequin draws out of his bosom a little vial containing a sleeping drug, which he advises Columbine to administer to her husband, so as to induce him to sleep so soundly that they can effect their escape. He has scarcely finished giving these directions, when the door opens, and Tonio, the servant, rushes across the scene, calling out in exaggerated terror, that Punchinello is coming, that he is armed, knows everything, and that he, Tonio, is going to barricade himself in the inner room, so as to escape his wrath. As the terrified servant slams the second door behind him, the public loudly applaud, while Columbine hastily bids Harlequin depart; but, even while scaling the window, he again recommends the use of the sleeping drug.

Dressed as Punchinello, Canio comes on the scene, just in time to overhear Columbine call out to her vanishing stage lover the self-same words he overheard that very day. Clutching his heart, he comments upon this fact, then suddenly resuming his part in the play, inquires whether a man has not been there? Columbine pertly retorts that if he is not crazy he must be drunk, a remark which Canio answers by again forgetting his rôle, and exclaiming that he has been not drunk but beside himself for the past hour! The public, thinking all this part of the play, watch the couple with great interest, so Nedda, trying to fall back into her rôle, says that her husband has come back sooner than she expected. But Canio hisses that he returned barely in time; then, remembering that he is Punchinello, he vaguely comments on the fact that two guests have been sitting at his table.

To account for the second plate, Nedda says her servant has been supping with her, calling out to Tonio that he had better speak and acknowledge that he is lurking behind that closed door. Tonio's voice,—comically tremulous,—is now heard from within, assuring Canio that he may well believe his wife, for she would never be guilty of telling a lie, a remark which brings down the house. This

laughter merely fans Canio's wrath, and, after a suppressed curse directed at the public, he turns to Nedda, vowing that he has right to act like any other husband, and that he must know her lover's *name*.

Cold and smiling, Nedda tries to keep up the appearance of a play, inquiring whose name he wishes to know, looking at him in an injured way, and calling him twice by his comedy name. But Canio, beside himself with rage, vows that he is no longer Punchinello, and that if his face is pale it is merely because he is thirsting for revenge, and because he is determined to wash in blood the insult received. He passionately reproaches her with having deceived him, after he had picked her up from the gutter, saved her when a poor orphan from a miserable death, given her an honorable name, and lavished upon her a love foolishly bestowed.

His tones are so heartrending, that the women in the foreground show signs of emotion, some observing that the scene is so well played that it seems real! But the men silence the women, urging them to give the comedians a chance to continue, while Silvio remarks in an aside that he is sure something is amiss, and that he can hardly restrain himself from flying to his lady-love's rescue.

The chorus ceasing, Canio works himself up into a towering passion, while he relates how he had once hoped that although she had not married him for love, his wife would at least, through pity or gratitude, prove true to him, and thus reward him for all the sacrifices he had made. He bitterly recognizes that vice is too deeply rooted in her heart ever to be eradicated, that she has no compassion for him, and vows that he does not deserve the anguish he endures. The enthusiastic crowd, thinking his acting particularly effective, loudly applaud him, but Nedda coldly retorts that if he really judges her so unworthy of being his wife he need but drive her out of his house. This remark elicits scornful laughter from Canio, who bitterly tells her that she is false indeed, for she is trying to take advantage of his anger to rejoin her lover all the sooner. He swears however, that she shall not escape, but shall reveal the secret which he has already vainly tried to wring from her.

With a last desperate effort to maintain a part in the play, and thus bring her angry husband to his senses, Nedda assures him that he is mistaken, and again calls out to Tonio to come and tell his master that the man seated opposite her and supping with her, was only the timid and innocuous Harlequin. She says this with

a forced smile, which dies away, when she gazes up into Canio's infuriated face, for, no longer master of his jealousy, he now rushes forward, threatening to kill her if she does not speak.

Nedda defiantly retorts that her lips are sealed, and that however bad she may be, she is not vile enough to reveal such a secret as that. She adds that her love is stronger than his hatred, and that she will not speak even should her silence cost her her life. The mystified crowd again inquire whether they are in earnest, or whether this is part of their play, and when Peppe tries to create a diversion, Tonio wilfully detains him, assuring him that it is not safe for any one to interfere. During this brief aside, Silvio concludes that he cannot stand the uncertainty much longer, and therefore prepares to draw nearer to the rustic stage.

Undeterred by the spectators, whose presence he has completely forgotten, Canio snatches a knife from the table, hoarsely crying: "The name! the name!" only to be again defied by his wife. Convinced at last that this is no play, but tragic earnest, Silvio now starts up in his seat, drawing his dagger; but the sight of Canio's passion-distorted face and drawn knife has so terrified the women spectators, that they

rise screaming, thus preventing the men from advancing, and impeding the movements of Silvio, who is trying to come to Nedda's aid.

In the paroxysm to his rage, Canio, perceiving that Nedda is trying to flee, suddenly stabs her in the back. In falling, she reiterates that she will not speak, but a moment later, while the crowd and Harlequin exclaim in horror, she sinks to the floor calling Silvio. His name has barely passed her lips, when he leaps upon the stage, but as he bends over her, Canio, realizing that this is his hated rival, again raises his knife, and bidding him a ghastly welcome, plunges it deep into his heart!

A scene of wild confusion ensues, wherein all exclaim in terror. Some of the foremost men spring forward to secure Canio, who dropping his knife, and gazing fixedly before him, tragically announces: "The play is finished."

LA TOSCA

THE libretto of *La Tosca* is by Sardou, the French playwright, and the score by the Italian composer Puccini. The scene is laid in Rome, in the year eighteen hundred, on the eve of the battle of Marengo, when it is still doubtful whether Napoleon or the Austrians will have the upper hand. The rising curtain reveals the interior of a church, where a painter has evidently been at work, for scaffolding stands near the door of one of the chapels. On the easel rests a large canvas, covered by a cloth, while palette, mahlstick and colors are in full view, as is also a basket of provisions.

Into the semi-gloom of the church steals Angelotti, a political offender, who has just effected his escape from the state prison of Sanct Angelo. Pale, exhausted, and still in prison garb, he gazes cautiously around him, then, finding himself alone, he ejaculates that he has evidently escaped detection, and that although he trembles at every sound, his deliverance is near. He looks around him, and in a soliloquy notes the holy water basin, the column, and the image of

the Virgin, at whose feet his sister has hidden a key, which will admit him to the family vault or chapel, where he can remain concealed. In his agitation, he seeks feverishly, overlooks the key, and it is only when his anxiety becomes almost unbearable, that he discovers it, and proceeds to fit it into the chapel door.

Angelotti has barely closed the door behind him, when the sexton comes grumbling in the church, declaring he cannot get the painter's brushes clean. It is only when he reaches the scaffold, that he discovers that he has been talking to himself. He is surprised, and observes that he could have sworn the artist was there, at work. Still, when he notes that the provisions in the basket are intact, he feels convinced that Cavaradossi has not been there at all.

The prayer-bell sounding just then, the sexton drops on his knees, and intones the angelus. He is still busy with his prayers, when the artist comes upon him, and mockingly inquires what he is doing? Rising painfully, the sexton mutters that he is merely saying his prayers, but the painter, paying little heed to him, prepares to continue his work. As he pushes aside the cloth, and gazes at his picture of the Magdalen, the sacristan gasps out in surprise a broken

sentence, which the painter urges him to complete. It is to the effect that the artist has caught the exact likeness of a lady, who has recently come hither every day to pay her devotions to the Madonna. In speaking thus, the sacristan crosses himself, bowing to the image at whose feet the escaped prisoner had found the promised key.

Cavaradossi confesses that he too noticed the lady, and that taking the advantage of her rapt devotion, he stole her likeness for his masterpiece. The sacristan is shocked at such a sacrilege, but continues to wait upon the painter, who pursues his labors, and finally draws a small miniature from his breast-pocket to compare it with the picture on the easel. In a solo, he comments upon the contrast, for while his Magdalen is a blue-eyed, golden-haired beauty, his lady-love is a brunette, with velvety eyes.

These comments are not graciously received by the sacristan, who, while cleaning brushes, mutters that the painter jests with holy things, and that he frequents the society of the wicked, for his lady-love is none other than *La Tosca*, a public singer.

His righteous indignation, however, does not make him lose sight of the provision basket, whose contents will fall to his lot, should the

painter not make use of them. He therefore adroitly pushes it to one side ; then, having artfully questioned the painter, and ascertained that the latter is not hungry, goes off rubbing his hands, cheered by the thought of the supper he will have, but muttering a grim reminder to lock up carefully on leaving.

Annoyed by all these interruptions, Cavaradossi abruptly dismisses him, and when his footsteps have died away, works on in silence. As no sound is heard, the prisoner deems it safe to venture out, so as to secure a disguise hidden in another part of the church.

The slight sound he makes attracts the attention of the painter, who gazes in utter amazement at the escaped prisoner. Terrified at first, Angelotti makes a timid attempt to retire, then, suddenly recognizing a friend in the artist, rushes towards him with open arms. He is, however, obliged to give his name, for prison-life has so sorely changed him, that Cavaradossi has some difficulty in recognizing the head of the supplanted government.

With almost instant realization of the peril of the situation, the painter hurries to the church-door, and only after he has locked it securely, listens to Angelotti's explanations, generously offering to aid him. They have

scarcely begun their conversation, when a voice outside, loudly calls the painter. With a hurried explanation that La Tosca,—the most jealous of women,—is without, and must be admitted, Cavaradossi advises Angelotti to creep back into the vault.

The prisoner would fain obey, but emotion, added to exhaustion, has temporarily robbed him of all power of locomotion. Seizing the basket the sacristan so solicitously set aside, and thrusting it into Angelotti's hand, the painter helps him into the chapel, while the cries without become more and more imperative.

As soon as all is safe, he hastens to unlock the door, asking with feigned calm what La Tosca wants? But, without heeding this, she peers all around, as if in search of some one.

When her lover tries to embrace her, she holds him off, and asks why he locks the door? When coolly told it is by the sacristan's orders, she abruptly inquires with whom he could be talking? The painter's explanation, that he was answering her calls, proves very unsatisfactory to the jealous woman, who passionately demands where *she* is, declaring she heard whispers, and caught the swish of a skirt. The painter strives to reassure her, but when he

tries to embrace her, she reminds him such demonstrations are hardly seemly in the presence of the Madonna, whose image she now proceeds to deck with the flowers she has brought. Her pious labors ended, she kneels in prayer, before joining her lover, who has gone back to work. She then informs him that immediately after the play, that evening, he must meet her at the stage-door, so that they can steal off together, to a little villa, their usual trysting spot.

Preoccupied by the thought of the prisoner, Cavaradossi gives such a mechanical assent to her proposition, that she is again struck by his lukewarm reception of all her remarks. In a beautiful solo she describes the charms of nature, their influence over loving hearts, and by her ardor succeeds in kindling an answering flame in her lover's heart. For a moment, he forgets all save her, then, remembering, seeks to dismiss his lady-love, alleging the exigencies of work, a plea which vexes her sorely.

She is about to depart, however, when her glance falls upon his picture. Showing signs of great agitation, she asks who it may be, and when told "a Magdalen," flatly declares she does not like her, because she is far too handsome. While the painter laughs at this dubious compliment, she tries to recall where she has seen such

blue eyes, and although he tries to put her off the track, soon remembers that they are those of the Duchess Atavanti.

All her jealousy is roused afresh, and her lover has much ado to convince her that he is not even acquainted with the lady, whom he has merely seen in church, and used for artistic purposes. After sundry disparaging remarks, La Tosca, gently urged by the painter, steps down from the scaffolding. In a passionate love-song he assures her that eyes of heaven's own blue have no power over him, for her dark orbs have completely enslaved him. This assurance is so satisfactory to the loving, but jealous woman, that she sinks into his arms, and no longer denies him a kiss, although they are still near the Madonna. In a duet, the lovers comfort and pardon each other, and after one more embrace prepare to part, La Tosca archly bidding her lover admit no one after she has gone. Thus reminded of Angelotti,—whom he has again momentarily forgotten,—Cavaradossi hastens her departure, and this time La Tosca kisses him, certain that the Madonna will understand. She then leaves, calling out a last mischievous recommendation to paint a Magdalen with dark eyes!

When the last echo of her footsteps has

died away in the distance, the painter—making sure that no one is near—releases Angelotti from his imprisonment in the vault. He rapidly explains that La Tosca, while true as steel, cannot keep secrets from her confessor, and inquires what plans have been made for Angelotti's further safety? The escaped prisoner explains that his sister bade him don the women's garments concealed under the altar, steal out of church, and join her.

The painter,—who has hitherto suspected the beautiful duchess of some love intrigue—now understands her repeated visits to the church, and admires her sisterly devotion, for Angelotti tells him she has acted thus, to rescue her brother from the clutches of his cruel rival Scarpia.

At the mention of Scarpia—the villain now in power,—the painter hotly denounces him as a monster steeped in every vice, and volunteers his aid, vowing he would risk his very life to baulk the schemes of such a traitor.

As Angelotti shows signs of uneasiness, Cavaradossi urges him to escape through the chapel door, and, following a rough hillside path, betake himself to the little villa, for which he gives him a key. The prisoner, seizing the women's clothes, is about to leave,

when the painter suddenly detains him, to explain that should any danger threaten, he need but take refuge in the garden well, where, half way down, and cleverly concealed, is a secret passage, connecting that place with a cellar, where no one can ever find him.

They are about to separate, when the boom of the fortress cannon—the usual signal for the escape of a state prisoner—falls upon their ear. Angelotti is almost paralyzed by fear, but the painter, exclaiming that Scarpia's bloodhounds will soon be on his track, implores him to flee. He even offers to go with him, and hearing hurried footsteps without, declares he will cover his retreat, and die fighting rather than surrender him.

The painter and his trembling companion have barely vanished through the chapel door, when the sacristan comes panting upon the scene, to announce great news. He is sorely disappointed at not finding the painter, for he ruefully comments that "he who grieves an unbeliever gains plenary indulgence." Before he can bewail his ill-luck any further, the church is invaded by choir-boys, pupils of the church-school, by penitents, and acolytes, all in riotous spirits. Calling loudly to the noisy throng, the sacristan urges them to hasten into

the vestry, and when they inquire why, announces that the miscreant Bonaparte having been defeated, a grand cantata is to be given on the public square that evening, where they will be expected to take part, La Tosca singing all the solos. The choir-boys interrupt this announcement sundry times, bursting into loud exclamations of joy, and cheering everything and everybody, in the wild enthusiasm created by the prospect of extra pay.

They are still vociferating loudly, when Scarpia appears on the scene with his guards, and imperiously demands the meaning of such a commotion in church? In abject fear, the sacristan lamely seeks to explain, but Scarpia abruptly orders the choir-boys to prepare for the Te Deum, and when they have vanished, summons the sacristan, who is trying to escape in their wake.

While this man cowers under his eagle eye, Scarpia orders his officer Spolletto to post men at the various doors, and when every exit is secure, to search the church. When Spolletto has gone to execute these commands, Scarpia turns to the sexton, and bluntly informs him that a prisoner of state effected his escape an hour ago, and is hiding in the church. The poor sacristan gasps in terror, and when

Scarpia asks which is the Avanti chapel, points it out with trembling hand.

It is only when he draws near it, however, that he perceives that the door is slightly open, and becomes aware that a new key is in the lock. Thinking he has his man, Scarpia hurries in, only to come out shortly after, visibly annoyed, yet toying with a fan he found there. In an aside, he mutters that the booming cannon was a grievous blunder, for it has warned the prisoner and enabled him to escape. Still, he fancies Angelotti cannot have disappeared without the aid of an accomplice, whom he hopes to trace by means of the fan as a clew. Close scrutiny soon reveals that it is ornamented with the escutcheon of the Duchess d'Atavanti, whose portrait he recognizes in the picture on the easel.

In answer to his questions, the sacristan explains that the painting is the work of Mario Cavaradossi, a man whom Scarpia hates because he is the fortunate lover of La Tosca, the lady whom he has elected to love. Scarpia's comments on this information are interrupted by one of his men, who now steps out of the chapel with the painter's basket. The sexton's disappointment at finding it empty, rouses Scarpia's curiosity, and after questioning guard

and sexton he wisely concludes that the food was devoured by Angelotti, and that the painter is in some way implicated in his escape.

Just then La Tosca hurries into church, and the chief of police,—signaling to his men to hide,—draws behind a pillar, whence he is heard to exclaim that just as a handkerchief kindled the fires of Othello's jealousy, the fan he holds shall serve to rouse La Tosca's ire. Meantime, quite unconscious of his presence, she runs around, seeking her lover, and calling him repeatedly. At a sign from Scarpia, the sacristan advances, asking whether she wants Cavaradossi, who, he declares, has utterly vanished. Then, obeying another sign from Scarpia, the sacristan leaves, while La Tosca wonders aloud whether her lover could be deceiving her.

The chief of police emerging, offers holy water to the singer, who accepts it absent-mindedly and crosses herself. Then, Scarpia tries to gain her ear by a compliment upon her exalted calling, flattery which she barely acknowledges, for people are entering the church. But, when Scarpia goes on to remark that a pious actress is a rarity, and that she comes hither to pray, while others whom he could name, merely use the house of prayer as

a trysting spot, La Tosca, in amazement, inquires what he means? He then repeats his statement, and in answer to new questions exhibits the fan, insinuating that it can scarcely be considered a painter's tool.

When La Tosca jealously demands where he found it, he declares that it lay on the easel, and that the advent of worshipers must have interrupted a very tender interview, for the lady fled in such haste that she dropped some of her feathers.

Meantime, La Tosca has examined the fan and recognized the arms. All her former jealousy and suspicions are roused, to the great satisfaction of Scarpia, who, drawing aside, watches her closely and notes every word she utters. Unmindful of his scrutiny, the actress exclaims that she had come hither, full of sorrow, solely to tell her lover, that, owing to the cantata, their joyful meeting in the villa must be postponed.

On beholding her tears, Scarpia gives vent to a joyful aside, then insinuates that he is all sympathy and would fain comfort her. But, although he assures her that he would give his life to assuage her sorrows, she pays no heed to him, and wails that her lover is doubtless making fun of her in another's company!

While Scarpia utters a second joyful aside to see the poison working so satisfactorily, peasants and citizens drop into church. Nevertheless, La Tosca goes on wondering how her lover could forget her, and whether the villa,—hitherto sacred to their love,—is now desecrated by the presence of another. The mere thought that the lady, whose picture confronts her on the easel may be there, rouses her to such a pitch of wrathful jealousy, that she clenches her fist, vowing such a thing shall never be.

When Scarpia sanctimoniously reproves her for harboring unseemly thoughts in church, she sobs that heaven will surely forgive her, and slowly passes out, while the edifice gradually fills. After escorting her to the door with ostentatious courtesy, Scarpia hastily summons Spolletto, bidding him take three men, a closed carriage, and follow the singer. After signifying his readiness, and ascertaining that he will find Scarpia at the Farnese palace, should he need him, Spolletto departs in great haste.

While the cardinal and priests advance towards the altar, and the organ plays, the villain Scarpia exults at having roused the demon of jealousy in La Tosca's heart, thus making her his tool to secure, not only Angelotti—whom he means to hang,—but the painter also, who shall

end on a scaffold, while La Tosca, for whom he would renounce his hopes of heaven, will fall victim to his unholy passion. This aside, with its background of worshipers, its accompaniment of prayer, and blending as it does with the divine service, is a masterly conception.

The second act reveals an apartment in the Farnese palace, where Scarpia is supping, gazing at his watch from time to time, and commenting that with such a decoy as La Tosca, his people should, by this time, have secured both prisoners, who, by sunrise on the morrow, are to hang on his tallest gallows. All at once, he summons his servant Sciarrone, to make inquiries. The window being opened, he listens to the orchestra on the square, where the people are dancing, while waiting for La Tosca to appear and the cantata to begin. Scarpia then informs Sciarrone that he wishes to see the singer as soon as the performance is over, and fearing a mere message may fail to bring her, writes a note which he hands to his subordinate. The latter having gone, Scarpia, in a solo, expresses his belief, that, for the painter's sake, La Tosca will walk into his toils, where—such is his base nature—a conquest by force will please him even better than one due to sentimental moonlight serenades, or the usual inani-

ties of love-making. He concludes by vowing that woman and wine are two gifts of the gods, and that he is determined to taste all the joys to be derived from both.

His solo ended, Sciarrone announces Spolletto, whom Scarpia receives with feigned indifference, demanding his report. The man—plainly afraid of his chief—relates that they followed the lady, watched the house, saw her come out, and entering the premises, vainly searched dwelling and grounds. This account, interrupted by many questions and angry interjections from Scarpia,—who is about to consign his unfortunate servant to the gallows—concludes with the remark that the painter's flippant manner having led him to conclude he knew more than he chose to reveal, he has brought him along, and that he is awaiting further orders in the antichamber.

At the thought of having one victim in his clutches, Scarpia forgets all displeasure, and tells Spolletto to produce his prisoner, while Sciarrone is instructed to summon the executioner, judge, and clerk. In a few moments therefore, the painter appears before an examining board, where, in answer to his angry questions, Scarpia, with mock politeness, repeatedly invites him to be seated. Then, he only in-

forms Cavaradossi that a prisoner has escaped, a statement interrupted by La Tosca's voice, without, in the cantata. Both men listen, but Scarpia promptly resumes his speech, accusing the painter of harboring the criminal in the church, of providing him there with food and raiment, and of conveying him to his villa. Briefly and sternly Cavaradossi denies all charges, demands the name of his informer, and declares that although he allowed the police to search his house to their hearts' content, they found nothing incriminating. But Spolletto interferes, reporting that the painter laughed at them for doing their duty! The artist hotly retorts that it is impossible not to laugh at the absurdity of their suspicions, whereupon Scarpia threateningly demands where Angelotti may be? He accuses Cavaradossi, a second and third time, and is just warning him that torture may conquer his reticence, when La Tosca comes in, running forward to embrace her lover.

While she clings to him, the artist, under his breath, warns her to be silent or she will kill him. Overcome with jealous rage, Scarpia now orders Cavaradossi to be led into the next chamber, ostensibly for further investigation, but in reality to undergo preparatory torture. As judge and prisoner pass out, he covertly directs

the executioner to apply only the customary pressure at first, and to await further instructions before proceeding.

Left alone with La Tosca, Scarpia invites her to be seated, and she, concealing her fears as best she can, awaits his next move. When Scarpia alludes to the fan, La Tosca feigns indifference, and in answer to a question whether she found the duchess in the villa, reports that the painter was there alone. As Scarpia reveals signs of incredulity, she repeats her statement, whereupon he suggests that she is showing undue excitement over trifling matters, and interrupts the conversation to summon Sciarrone, and inquire of him what the witness says. When Sciarrone reports him silent, Scarpia gives orders to apply greater pressure, a remark which La Tosca does not understand. Still, hoping to gain time and pacify her lover's foe, she smiles upon Scarpia, innocently asking whether he would have her tell untruths.

Impressively, he declares that by truthfulness only she can spare the painter great anguish, words which awaken her suspicions, and prompt her to inquire in trembling tones what is going on beyond yonder closed door? After an ambiguous reply, which further alarms her, Scarpia brutally informs her that her lover's head is even

now bound in a fillet of steel, which is tightened at every refusal to speak.

La Tosca cannot believe what she hears until a deep groan from Cavaradossi brings conviction. With fiendish cruelty, Scarpia now urges her to speak, until she promises to do so if they will only release the victim. The necessary orders are given to Sciarrone, but when La Tosca vows she must see her lover before she utters a word, Scarpia roughly refuses to permit it. Meantime, through the half open door, the lovers contrive to exchange a few remarks, Cavaradossi declaring he scorns pain, and urging La Tosca to follow his example and be silent.

His wishes are enough. When Scarpia again presses the singer to speak, she refuses to obey, and when he threatens new tortures for her lover, she frantically interposes between him and the open door, denouncing him, and pleading with him, being, as Scarpia sneeringly informs her, far more tragical than she ever appeared upon the stage! With an outburst of ferocity, he then suddenly bids his subordinates throw open the doors, so she can see and hear the tortures to which the painter is subjected.

From an inner room Cavaradossi is now heard grimly defying his foes, while Scarpia

alternately urges the executioner to redouble his efforts, and the almost frantic La Tosca to speak, thereby saving her lover further pain. Both Cavaradossi and La Tosca show a fortitude which exasperates their cruel torturers, although the actress implores her lover to let her speak. When he again enjoins silence, Scarpia, enraged, bids his henchmen silence the obstinate prisoner. At a cry of bitter anguish wrung from Cavaradossi, La Tosca, unable to endure any more, springs from the sofa where she has dropped, and hurriedly whispers that Scarpia had better look in the well, in the villa garden. She has no sooner given this information, than, true to his word, Scarpia bids the executioner cease, and the man steps out of the torture-chamber, curtly reporting that his victim has fainted.

Demanding that her lover be brought to her, La Tosca hangs over him in agony, until by her caresses she brings him back to life. Gazing vaguely around him, and recognizing his torturers in the background, the painter faintly inquires whether he has spoken, and is momentarily reassured by La Tosca. But, when Scarpia in loud tones bids Spolletto search in the well in the villa garden, Cavaradossi, realizing that La Tosca has spoken to save him suf-

fering, bitterly denounces her as a traitress. She is pleading with him for forgiveness, and he is still repelling her, when Sciarrone enters in great perturbation, to announce that the public rejoicings have suddenly turned to mourning, for the Royal troops have been defeated by Bonaparte at Marengo. This news is a great blow to Scarpia, who fears for his position; but it rouses Cavaradossi to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that he forgets all physical suffering for a moment, and gives vent to an outburst of triumph. Fearing it may endanger his life, La Tosca, vainly tries to silence him, but the painter defies Scarpia to his face, denouncing him as a cowardly butcher.

At that insult, Scarpia sentences Cavaradossi to immediate hanging, and summoning Sciarrone bids him bear the prisoner away and execute his orders. Clinging wildly to her lover, La Tosca is forcibly torn from his side, and Scarpia holds her back when he is borne away. Left alone with the villain, La Tosca frantically implores him to save the painter, while he calmly sits down to his interrupted meal, inviting her to share it with him, and hinting that if she consent to grant his wishes, they may yet be able to devise means to rescue Cavaradossi from the gallows. His words and tone are so full of in-

situation, that La Tosca takes her seat opposite him, coolly bidding him name his price. After some beating around the bush, he explains that she has roused his passionate love to such a pitch that he has vowed she shall be his.

When he draws near her with open arms, she flees, and threatens to throw herself out of the window, or to appeal to the queen, but she is baffled at every turn by his imperturbable assurance that all she can do will be vain, for nothing short of immediate consent to his desires will save Cavaradossi from infamous death.

He plays with demoniacal cruelty upon her feelings, making her listen to the drums beating for execution, and pointing out the waiting gallows. This scene is interrupted by the return of Spolletto; he reports having found and seized Angelotti, who has, however, died on his hands, after swallowing a dose of poison. Thus baffled, Scarpia roughly bids Spolletto hang the prisoner's corpse to a gibbet, and then swears to take double vengeance upon Cavaradossi, unless La Tosca sacrifice herself to save him.

The strain is greater than the loving woman can bear, so she mutely signifies her consent. Then, suddenly recovering the power of speech, she bargains that her lover be freed immedi-

ately. With devilish cunning Scarpia explains that he cannot openly release a prisoner, but can change his hanging to a military execution,—a simulated one of course,—so that when every one believes him dead he can escape. Mistrusting Scarpia, *La Tosca* insists that the orders for the mock execution be given in her presence to Spolletto, who intimates complete comprehension of the emphatic but double meaning orders he receives, which delude the too trusting singer.

La Tosca next demands to be admitted to the prisoner's cell at four o'clock, so as to warn Cavaradossi in person that he is to die a stage death, in order to obtain his release. As soon as Spolletto has gone, Scarpia claims the fulfilment of *La Tosca*'s promise, but she declares he must first write a safe-conduct for her and her lover. Indifferently, he inquires what route she proposes to take, and writes rapidly, while she softly draws near the table, and under pretext of drinking some wine previously poured out for her, gets possession of and conceals a knife.

The permit being written, Scarpia advances open-armed to embrace her, but is met by the point of the knife *La Tosca* holds, which sinks deep in his heart, while she proudly assures

him that it is thus she kisses traitors! He falls, clinging frantically to her gown, calling for help, and cursing her ere he breathes his last.

Then, only, La Tosca exclaims that she forgives him, washes the blood from her hands, arranges her hair, and secures the safe-conduct,—still clasped in the dead man's fingers. She is about to leave the corpse in darkness, when thinking better of it, she lights candles which she sets at its head and feet, and detaching a crucifix from the wall, places it on the breast between the clasped hands. Then, remarking that the man, before whom all Rome cowered, now lies harmless at her feet, she leaves the room.

The third act represents a platform in the Castle St. Angelo, where stand a chair and table. An open trap-door, with a flight of steps, is seen. It is still so early in the morning, that the Vatican and St. Peter's are dimly outlined against the sky, and only the distant song of a shepherd breaks the silence. As it grows lighter, however, church bells ring, and a jailor appears. After attending to the lamp under the crucifix, he gazes over the parapet into the courtyard, to ascertain whether the prisoner and his escort are coming. Before long, Cavaradossi appears, and the jailor, open-

ing the register, begins the usual routine. When the sergeant has signed, he withdraws with his men, leaving Cavaradossi alone with the jailor, who proceeds to inform him that he still has an hour at his disposal, and that a priest can be summoned should he care to see one. This offer is declined, but the painter implores the jailor to do him a favor, which the latter concedes, provided it does not conflict with his duty.

The artist then explains that he wishes to send a parting message to one dear to him, and that if the jailor will furnish him with the means, and will promise to deliver the letter, he will bestow upon him the ring he wears, the sole object of value left him.

After a moment's hesitation, the jailor accepts this bribe, motions to Cavaradossi to sit down at the table, and bids him write. The first few lines are written in hot haste; then Cavaradossi begins to muse on the past, when he used to wait in the villa garden for the welcome sound of his beloved's feet. He depicts his rapture, and their exchange of caresses whenever they met, contrasting the bliss of those meetings with the anguish of this moment, when he is vainly trying to bid her a last farewell. Overcome by emotion, he bursts into

tears. As his face is buried in his hands, he does not perceive Spolletto and another soldier, who appear at the head of the stairs, and make room for La Tosca, to whom they silently point out the grieving prisoner.

Her evident fear vanishes at the sight of the painter. Springing joyfully forward, she raises his drooping head, and shows him the safe-conduct written by Scarpia. At first, Cavaradossi is speechless with surprise, then he realizes that the document allows La Tosca and a gentleman escort to leave the country unchallenged. The singer rapturously assures him that he is free, although he vows he cannot understand how Scarpia came to make such a concession, which La Tosca aptly terms his first and last.

When Cavaradossi requests an explanation of these mysterious words, she calmly describes the preceding scene, concluding her brief and graphic statement by confessing that she stabbed the monster. At first, Cavaradossi refuses to believe her, but he ends by rapturously kissing the brave hands, which hitherto he had known only as gentle or tender.

La Tosca soon checks his raptures to explain that she has collected money and jewels, and is ready to start with him. But first, he must submit to a mock execution, with blank car-

tridge. She now tenderly coaxes him to play his part well, fall at the first shot, and remain immovable until her signal, when they will flee to Civita Vecchia, whence a vessel will bear them off to love and liberty.

In a duet, the lovers exchange their raptures at this bright prospect, and only after a while remember their critical position. Once more, La Tosca anxiously reminds her lover to play his part well, and when he laughingly assures her that he will drop immediately, cautions him to be very careful, so as not to hurt himself in his fall. They are just indulging in new raptures, when an officer and squad of soldiers appear with Spolletto and the jailor. The latter intimates that the fatal moment has come, for the clock is striking four; the painter therefore says he is ready, and La Tosca, suppressing a giggle, adds a soft caution. The artist replies in an undertone that he has all her instructions by heart, and, this brief dialogue over, they restrain their mirth and part, La Tosca taking up her stand at one side, but evidently chaffing at every delay.

When the jailor offers to bandage the painter's eyes, the latter smilingly declines, and voluntarily takes his position. The men prepare to fire, while La Tosca keeps up a running com-

ment on all she sees. Although merely a simulated execution, the preparations are so grewsome, that she claps her hands over her ears so as not to hear what is going on. When her lover falls, she gaily kisses her hand to him, and admiringly exclaims how well he plays his part ; then, the sub-officer bends over the victim to give the usual last blow with his dagger, but Spolletto checks him. A moment later, all the men pass out of sight. La Tosca, who has watched their every movement, trembling lest her lover should incautiously give some sign of life, calls to him not to stir, runs to the trap-door, and listens to the steps dying away in the depths, repeatedly adjuring her lover to remain just as he is. It is only when all is still, that she dares run to him and eagerly bid him rise.

To her surprise Cavaradossi does not move ; she touches him, and implores him to come ; but, receiving no response to this appeal, she soon tears off the cloak covering him, and discovers that the simulated execution has been real ! With a wild cry of " murdered ! " she falls upon his prostrate body, and raves until returning steps are heard upon the stairs.

In loud threatening tones Sciarrone states that a murder has been committed, and when the chorus eagerly inquire whether he means

that Scarpia is no more, he impressively confirms the news. Meanwhile, La Tosca mourns over her lover, and Spolletto and his men discuss the crime, determining to seize her, for she is still up on the terrace and cannot escape.

A moment later they appear through the trap-door. Spolletto rushes towards La Tosca, vowed she will pay dear for his master's life, but with a frantic push, she frees herself from his grasp, and, rushing to the parapet, springs upon it. Poising there for a moment, she challenges Scarpia to confront her before the throne of God, ere she flings herself down into the court.

A mad rush of the soldiers,—who hang in awe-struck silence over the abyss,—ends this opera, and the curtain falls.

LE PROPHÈTE

LE PROPHÈTE (the Prophet), was written by Scribe, set to music by Meyerbeer, and first produced at the Paris Opera in 1849. The scene is laid in Germany, during the early part of the sixteenth century, when the Anabaptists caused great disturbances in the north of Europe.

The opera opens in the country, near Dordrecht, where a chorus of peasants rejoice that their day of toil is nearly ended, and the hour of rest near. They are answered by the boys from the mill, caroling that as the wind has gone down, they are perforce idle.

A moment later, Bertha, a young peasant girl, comes out of one of the houses, singing to herself that the happy day is coming when she will be united to her lover, whose mother she momentarily expects. Her maidenly confession of love is barely finished, when an elderly woman, in traveling costume, comes upon the scene.

Bertha runs to meet and welcome her, declaring she has watched for her ever since

dawn. When told that her lover is impatient to see her, she modestly expresses her sense of unworthiness, until Fides assures her that she is quite worthy of John, for whom she will make a capable wife. Then she adds that they must leave immediately, so as to reach home before nightfall, and presses Bertha to accompany her without delay.

However, Bertha, now explains that she cannot leave the village without a permit from the Count of Oberthal, whose castle she points out. Aware that these formalities must be observed, Fides proposes that they hasten to the castle to obtain the desired permission, and both women set out. Meantime, three Anabaptists have preceded them, and are near the castle, singing one of their hymns. Their sombre robes and fanatical gestures startle Bertha, until Fides explains that they are merely seeking to win proselytes.

The Latin hymn of the three preachers has,—as they expected—attracted a crowd, eager to hear what they may have to say. One of the trio therefore makes an address, bidding them rise up in their strength, and be lords and masters in their turn. His communistic speech ended, the three fanatics again intone their hymn ; but their words have borne fruit, for the

peasants now eagerly question them, asking what will become of the castles, the tithes, the lords, etc.? When the Anabaptists reply that the serfs will be masters, and the former lords slaves, the peasants, full of enthusiasm, loudly proclaim that this is surely the Voice of God calling them to secure vengeance and liberty.

The Anabaptists, pleased with the effect they have produced, again repeat their hymn; then, as if inspired, invite the peasants to immediate action, pointing to the castle, whither they offer to lead them to begin the work of destruction which is to result in abasing all of high degree, and in establishing equality everywhere. These seditious words inflame the peasants, who, armed with pitchforks, scythes, and spades, and vociferating threats, march on towards the castle.

As this mob ascends the steps, the doors open wide, and Count Oberthal suddenly appears, followed by a few friends and retainers. Habitual awe of their master, checks all further advance on the part of the peasants, whose belligerent attitude is instantly replaced by the customary subserviency.

Bertha has barely had time to exclaim that it is the count, himself, when he begins a speech, denouncing this tumult, which, he knows full

well, was caused by the preaching of the three fanatics. With sanctimonious tones and gestures the three monks reprove him as "one having eyes and not seeing," a statement which is instantly refuted, for even under robe and cowl, the count recognizes in one of them a former butler, summarily dismissed for stealing wine. He therefore points the finger of scorn at this wolf in sheep's clothing, and ends by ordering the ejection of all three preachers, who are summarily marched off the stage.

Then only, the count notices Bertha, graciously bids her make known her request, and listens while the peasant girl, encouraged by Fides, relates how she fell into the river one day, and was saved by a youth, who, since then, has become her lover. The older woman confirms this account, and then both beg that the lord will allow his vassal to leave the village, so as to marry the man she loves. Bertha adds that she can do naught without her master's sanction, although she would fain marry that very day, statements which Fides again echoes.

The libertine lord has been so charmed by the beauty and grace of the maiden, that he wishes to keep her for himself, and therefore refuses her permission to leave. Bertha and Fides wail aloud over this tyranny, but although

they appeal to the peasants, none ventures a word in their behalf. In authoritative tones the count bids his guards seize the two women, and disperse the mob, who, at the very first threat, scatter like chaff before the wind. Then, the count follows his captives into the castle, the doors closing upon him, while in the distance, the song of the Anabaptists is again heard. At the foot of the steps, the preachers meet the discomfited peasants, and evidently win a new hearing, for all kneel and make threatening gestures in the direction of the castle.

The second act is played in John's inn, in the suburbs of Leyden, where peasants are dancing, and cheering their host. A soldier calls for full glasses, so they can quench their thirst, a suggestion which all approve; but although it keeps John busy, he is preoccupied, and in an aside confesses that he longs for the arrival of his mother and of Bertha,—so soon to be his wife.

During this brief soliloquy, and while he is waiting upon his guests, the three Anabaptists enter. One of them, looking at John, utters an exclamation which attracts the attention of the two others, who stare at the landlord also. From the remarks they drop, one becomes

aware that, struck by John's resemblance to the patron saint in the cathedral in Münster, they fancy he will be the very man to carry out their plans.

One of them enjoining caution, they join the peasants, and by clever questions gradually elicit the information that their host is young, enthusiastic, brave, and so devout that he knows the whole Bible by heart! While one of the preachers is repeating to the others his conviction that John is the man destined by heaven to further their cause, the young landlord quietly dismisses the peasants, a proceeding which gives no offense, for the peasants pass out dancing, and wishing him luck.

John is sitting at a table, lost in thought, when one of the monks slaps him on the shoulder, and inquires the subject of his meditations? The young host replies that he is uneasy because his mother and betrothed have not yet appeared, and also because he is haunted by the remembrance of a dream which twice visited him. When the Anabaptists urge him to relate this dream, John complies, thinking they may be able to interpret it for him. In a beautiful recitative, he describes how he stood crowned, in a wonderful cathedral, the people all kneeling before him, and hailing him

as "David, son of the Most High." Then a sudden danger seemed to threaten him, and, in the midst of thunder and lightning, he was dragged before the mercy-seat, where he heard voices on earth loudly condemning him, while others in heaven plead for his forgiveness.

This narrative ended, the three Anabaptists unanimously inform John that heaven often makes its wishes known in visions, and that he must come with them, for it has been decreed that he shall reign! This prediction first startles the young innkeeper, but quickly recovering his composure, he playfully replies that he fully expects to reign over the sweetest empire,—the heart of the woman he loves!

The three Anabaptists consider such an excuse rank folly, and again urge him to accompany them; but, as John merely expatiates upon the flowers he has plucked to form a bridal crown and to deck the nuptial chamber, they soon go away, solemnly reiterating that he will soon be king.

Left alone, John thanks heaven that they are gone, so he can dwell upon his coming happiness. His pleasant meditations are, however, rudely interrupted by the trampling of horses' feet, a clash of arms, and the sudden entrance of a lady in tears. In answer to his exclama-

tion, Bertha, in an agony of terror, prays to be saved from the wicked men pursuing her. Before John can understand, soldiers draw near, and Bertha, hides in a recess under the stairs. The Count of Oberthal, who commands these troops, now explains that while conveying two captives to Haarlem, one of them effected her escape; he adds that he suspects John of harboring this fugitive, and loudly threatens to kill his mother unless he give Bertha up immediately.

At first, John does not understand, but when a few brief words have made the matter clear, he vainly offers his own life in exchange for that of his mother. Bertha, in her place of concealment, shudders lest he should yield to the count's threats, and John passionately declares that he cannot turn traitor even to save his mother's life. When the soldiers bring Fides in, however, and are about to slay her, filial love triumphs, for the heart-broken John draws Bertha out of her hiding-place, and silently hands her over to the count, who leads her away.

Dazed by grief, John sits there motionless, until his mother draws near, fervently blessing him for the sacrifice he has made. But the young man wildly wonders why heaven does not

annihilate the wicked, until the song of the Anabaptists striking his ear, suddenly reminds him of their proposal, and makes him think that God is sending them to him so he can be avenged.

As soon as the Anabaptists appear, and assure him that the crown still awaits his acceptance, John asks whether that will enable him to destroy his foes? Upon their assurance that Oberthal will be abandoned to his mercy, John promises to follow them, and asks what he must do. One of the preachers then explains that they have long been waiting for a heaven-sent prophet, and all three exclaim that the sign whereby they were to recognize heaven's elect, was the very dream which so troubled John.

Considerably surprised, yet not incredulous,—for he believes in dreams,—John does not doubt them when they inform him that, like Joan of Arc, he is destined to save his country, provided he renounce home and mother forever. But he demurs, drawing near the room where, even in sleep, his good mother is praying for her only child. The thought that she has no one else to protect her, makes him reject this proposal, until the three men, first singly, then together, remind him of his wrongs, combat his scruples, and, working upon an impression-

able nature, finally persuade him that being God's tool, he cannot refuse to work His will.

Although John pleads for a moment, wherein to take leave of his mother, the Anabaptists urge that having put his hand to the plough he must not look back, and John, realizing that his courage might fail should he see his mother again, allows himself to be led away, calling out to the empty walls the passionate farewell he is not allowed to express in any other manner.

The third act is played in a Westphalian forest, in winter, in the midst of the Anabaptist camp. Evening is drawing near, distant sounds of battle are heard, and when the soldiers finally return to camp with prisoners, they are warmly welcomed by their wives and children. The camp people crowd around the captives, but Mathisen,—one of the three Anabaptist leaders,—loudly proclaims that they must be slain. He is soon joined by Zaccharias, his companion, who also returns from the fray, brandishing a battle-axe, and singing a fanatical song, wherein he devotes to death all those opposed to his sect, and rejoicing over this triumph. He is in such an exalted mood, that he hardly heeds Mathisen's plea that the soldiers rest and be refreshed, although he heralds as "manna

from heaven" the advent of a troop of milk-maids and market women, who have skated across the lake, bearing provisions in buckets and baskets, to invite the soldiers to purchase their wares. A lively traffic takes place, the soldiers bartering their booty for provisions, which they proceed to enjoy, while the girls remove their skates and begin to dance. Little by little, however, all outsiders steal away, the darkness increases, and Zaccharias bids the men seek repose.

The next scene is played in Zaccharias' tent, where he is interviewing Mathisen, who has just returned from Münster. The governor, old Oberthal,—father of the count who persecuted Bertha,—has been summoned to surrender, but hearing that the Anabaptists have burned his son's castle, has refused to parley with them. Although Zaccharias is of opinion that he will soon be forced to surrender, his companion declares that unless Münster yield promptly they are lost, for the emperor is coming to destroy their sect. In fact, the danger seems so pressing, that Zaccharias proposes to take three hundred men, and storm the city that very night, a plan which he bids his companion keep secret, when steps draw near the tent.

A moment later, Jonas, the third Anabap-

tist leader, comes in with a squad of soldiers, reporting that they have just arrested a wanderer in the neighborhood of the camp. The prisoner, whom they produce, has however expressed a desire to join their forces, although he exclaims in an aside that he must dissemble, or lose all hope of reaching Münster, whither he is bound.

Hearing that he wishes to join their band, Zaccharias proceeds to instruct him in their catechism, making him swear in turn to respect the poor, kill the nobles, rob the rich, and keep pure in heart. These strange oaths are all taken by the stranger, and he is next invited to drink with the three Anabaptists, who swear he shall go with them to Münster, and help slay Oberthal, the old traitor. In their fanatical enthusiasm they fail to notice his start at that name, or his dismay when they swear to hang Count Oberthal as soon as they catch him. However, when they press him to promise his assistance, he takes an oath which satisfies them, although its purport is very different from what they suppose.

Once more they drink to this agreement, and then, wishing to see the face of the new member of their band, strike a light, which reveals to the Anabaptists the Count of Oberthal, who,

at the same time, becomes aware that he is face to face with his delinquent butler. His exclamations, and those of the Anabaptist chiefs, form a dramatic scene, which culminates in denunciations on either side. These are followed by an immediate sentence of death, and although one of the party suggests it might be well to await the prophet's decision, Zaccharias thinks such delay unnecessary. The prisoner is just being led away to execution, when John, the prophet, draws near.

He is approached with great deference by Zaccharias, who inquires why he looks so care-worn, when all Germany looks upon him as France upon Joan of Arc. John bitterly retorts that heroes sprang up to support Joan, while nothing but a rabble follows him ! This matter, however, troubles him far less than his anxiety about his mother, whom he longs to see, until sternly reminded that "Heaven has decreed her death, should his eyes ever again rest upon her." John is still pondering upon this mysterious threat, when the prisoner passes by under escort ; learning that the man is under sentence of death, he silences all Zaccharias' objections, and, having dismissed him and the guards, begins to examine the prisoner, to decide whether he is really guilty.

John is about to question the count—the man whom he has so longed to get in his power,—when he hears him softly exclaim that he deserves all he is suffering, for Bertha, in order to escape from him, plunged from the tower of his castle into the river! John breathlessly asks whether Bertha is dead, and Oberthal replies that she must have been saved in some miraculous manner, for he recently heard she had been seen in Münster. He adds that he was on his way thither, to entreat her forgiveness for all he had made her suffer, when he fell into the Anabaptists' hands. Hearing this, John bids the soldiers lead Oberthal away, declaring that Bertha alone shall decide his fate.

The next scene depicts the confusion in camp, when the three hundred men, having failed in their attempt to surprise Münster, return, denouncing the prophet in whom they trusted. They are suddenly confronted by John, who angrily demands how they dared go into battle without his orders? Each of the three leaders now tries to shift the blame from his own shoulders to those of his companions, but all three are equally reviled by the prophet, who then tells the people they might have known this attack was made without his

orders, for never yet has he failed to march ahead of them in time of danger.

The chorus feel the weight of God's anger—which the prophet assures them they have incurred—and at John's call, kneel to implore heaven's forgiveness, making choral responses to each petition he offers. As he concludes his supplications, a trumpet call is heard without, and John, talking like one inspired, declares it is a call to march forth on the morrow, when victory will perch upon their banners. This promise pleases the people, and calls forth a flattering comment from Zaccharias, which the prophet does not heed, for he is rapt in a vision, sees the heavens open, and hears praises sung in Münster's cathedral!

His revelation is hailed with reverent joy by the chorus, their chant bursting forth every time the prophet pauses in his speech, and the scene closes, as the rising sun scatters the mist, illuminating the battlements of Münster, whither the people are going, full of religious fervor, and ready to conquer or die.

The fourth act begins in a square in Münster, near the palace. Streams of citizens pass up the steps, carrying bags of money, precious vases and jewels, while others pass down, empty handed. These people sing that they are

obliged to yield to superior force ; but their fear of the Anabaptists,—who are now master of the town,—is evident, for as soon as any of that faction draw near, they cheer the prophet, only to curse him again sullenly when sure of not being overheard. The prophet is not only master of the city, but raises subsidies whenever the need occurs, as one citizen grumbles, while another proclaims that he has just decided to be crowned in the cathedral, as Emperor of Germany. This news is distasteful to the people, who are nevertheless too cowed not to cheer, whenever Anabaptists are near.

A beggar woman now arrives, and seats herself on the curbstone, whence she beseeches the charity of passers-by. When questioned, she mournfully begs for money, so she can have masses said for her dead son. This pitiful appeal touches the citizens, who give her alms, ere they hasten off to the cathedral, where the coronation is to take place, and where their presence has been required under penalty of death.

Fides—for it is she—is sitting alone upon the square, when a weary pilgrim comes along, whom she compassionates for his fatigue. Her voice is evidently a revelation, for the pilgrim—Bertha in disguise—exclaims aloud. The

women having recognized each other with equal amazement and joy, Fides inquires the meaning of the pilgrim robe. Bertha then explains that she assumed this disguise so as to travel unmolested, having been rescued from the river, where she had cast herself to escape from the count. On recovering strength, she set out from the fisherman's cottage, hoping to join Fides and her lover; but, finding the inn empty, and learning that they had gone on to Münster, she had hastened thither.

This hurried explanation given, Bertha urges Fides to lead her to her son, a request which grieves the older woman sorely, and makes her wonder, in an aside, how she can best break the sad news she has to tell. Bertha, however, keeps on urging, and only little by little learns that her lover is no more, for Fides declares that on awakening one morning, she found no other trace of John, than a few blood-stained garments, while a mysterious voice informed her that the prophet had said heaven decreed that she should never see her son again.

Both women assume that the prophet has slain John, and both denounce him; Bertha being filled with such a mad desire to avenge her lover, that she even proposes to steal into the palace, and stab his murderer with her own

hand ! While she vows that God will help her secure vengeance, Fides resorts to heart-broken prayer, the two voices blending in a duet of great power and beauty, ere both women go away.

The next scene is played in the Münster Cathedral, during the Coronation Ceremonies. After an imposing procession of the Anabaptist chiefs carrying the insigniæ, John, the prophet, passes on to the high altar,—which cannot be seen. Meantime, Fides stands in the almost deserted nave, and hears the chorus call down heaven's blessing upon the prophet's head. Then she kneels, fervently praying that instead of being blessed, he may be accursed, until the Latin chorus again breaks upon her devotions, and she thinks of Bertha, who,—like unto a second Judith,—stands armed, ready to pierce the heart of her country's foe.

After a third and last repetition of the choral, the procession reappears, the choristers loudly proclaiming the advent of a prophet,—not of human birth,—whom all must adore. Behind these choristers, comes John with his suite, and, at a given signal, all bow down in homage to him. Recalling his former visions, he dreamily repeats the words he once heard in fancy, and is convinced that he is, indeed, as the people proclaim, God's elect.

He alone is standing, when Fides suddenly looks up and recognizes him as her son, the astonished spectators echoing her loud cry. But, when John would fain embrace her, Mathisen softly reminds him that should he speak, she must die. Terrified by this awful threat, John pauses, and inquires, "Who is this woman?" only to be charged with filial ingratitude. Hitherto, the prophet's supernatural origin has proved the Anabaptists' most telling argument; so, when the people begin to question the likelihood of this woman's statements, the leaders loudly proclaim it a base lie. At their bidding John also feigns not to understand Fides, which calls forth more vehement maternal reproaches.

When, however, both Anabaptists and spectators unite in challenging the prophet to confute this charge, he, understanding only too plainly the covert threat, and seeing the daggers of the three leaders actually raised to strike his mother, stays their hand by an authoritative word and gesture. Then, while Fides joyfully exclaims that he is interfering to save her life, John loudly proclaims that the woman is mad, and that nothing short of a miracle can restore her to reason. As the people clamor for "a sign," the prophet kneels and prays, and, bidding his mother kneel also, asks whether she really

loved her offspring. Gazing full in his face, Fides affirms her love, but when he bids the leaders stab him, should she again repeat that he is her son, she falters, and finally vows that she has made a mistake, and has no longer a son.

The multitude receive this declaration as an unmistakable sign that an insane woman has been restored to reason by their prophet's miraculous influence, but, while they exclaim in wonder, poor Fides wails in an aside, that she had to deny her son to save his life. Then, John, after a whispered order to one of his train, marches solemnly out of the cathedral.

The fifth and last act is played in the palace at Münster. It begins down in the vaults, where the three leaders have met to discuss a new turn which affairs have taken. Zaccharias confirms the rumor that the emperor is coming to bombard the city, and Jonas produces a paper, offering the three leaders free passage with their booty, if they will only give up the prophet. All three men, in their usual sanctimonious way, declare heaven wills that they abandon their chief, and having reached this decision, leave the place.

A few moments later, Fides is ushered in, lamenting her inability to check Bertha's sinister project, but dwelling most of all upon the fact that

her son disowned her,—a sin she now condones, saying she would gladly give her life to secure his happiness. When the doors reopen and a guard announces that the prophet will soon appear, Fides fervently prays that the heavenly spirit will help her convince John of the error of his ways, and induce him to renounce his vain pomp, doing penance for all the crimes committed in religion's name.

Her prayer is barely ended when John enters, still in regal garb, and,—seeing they are alone,—greets her as "mother." Fides sternly replies that as he disowned her in church, before all the people, it now behooves him to humble himself before her,—which he does, begging her pardon for a repentant son. In her turn, Fides now refuses to own him, telling him that in the blood-stained king at her feet she fails to recognize her child, who was innocent.

Crushed by his mother's reproaches, and overcome with remorse for what he has done, John declares that eagerness to avenge Bertha prompted measures which he now regrets. Fides replies that had that been all, he might yet be forgiven, but that by falsely claiming a prophet's title, he had incurred the wrath of God.

When John again pleads for forgiveness, she

promises to grant it, on condition that he will renounce his rank, forsake all, and follow her. John demurs, thinking it would be a cowardly proceeding to forsake his comrades, until his mother persuades him to end all deception and make his peace with heaven. Having obtained this pledge, she embraces him tenderly, declaring heaven will pardon his sins when he has made every atonement in his power.

The duet between mother and son is just ended, when soldiers rush into the prison, calling out that they are betrayed. A sharp question from John, elicits the information that a plot had been discovered to assassinate him, and that they have just seized a mad woman, about to set the palace afire and destroy them all. Asking what is to be done with her, they then produce Bertha, who suddenly recognizes in the prophet the lover she deemed dead. In her horror, she, too, accuses him of bloodshed, vowing his crimes have raised an insuperable barrier between them. Feeling that Bertha's horror is part of his punishment, John gives way to despair; but although he and Fides plead with the girl, she refuses to listen, and, after cursing the prophet, stabs herself and dies in Fides' arms. After a few moments devoted to silent grief, John bids his officers save his

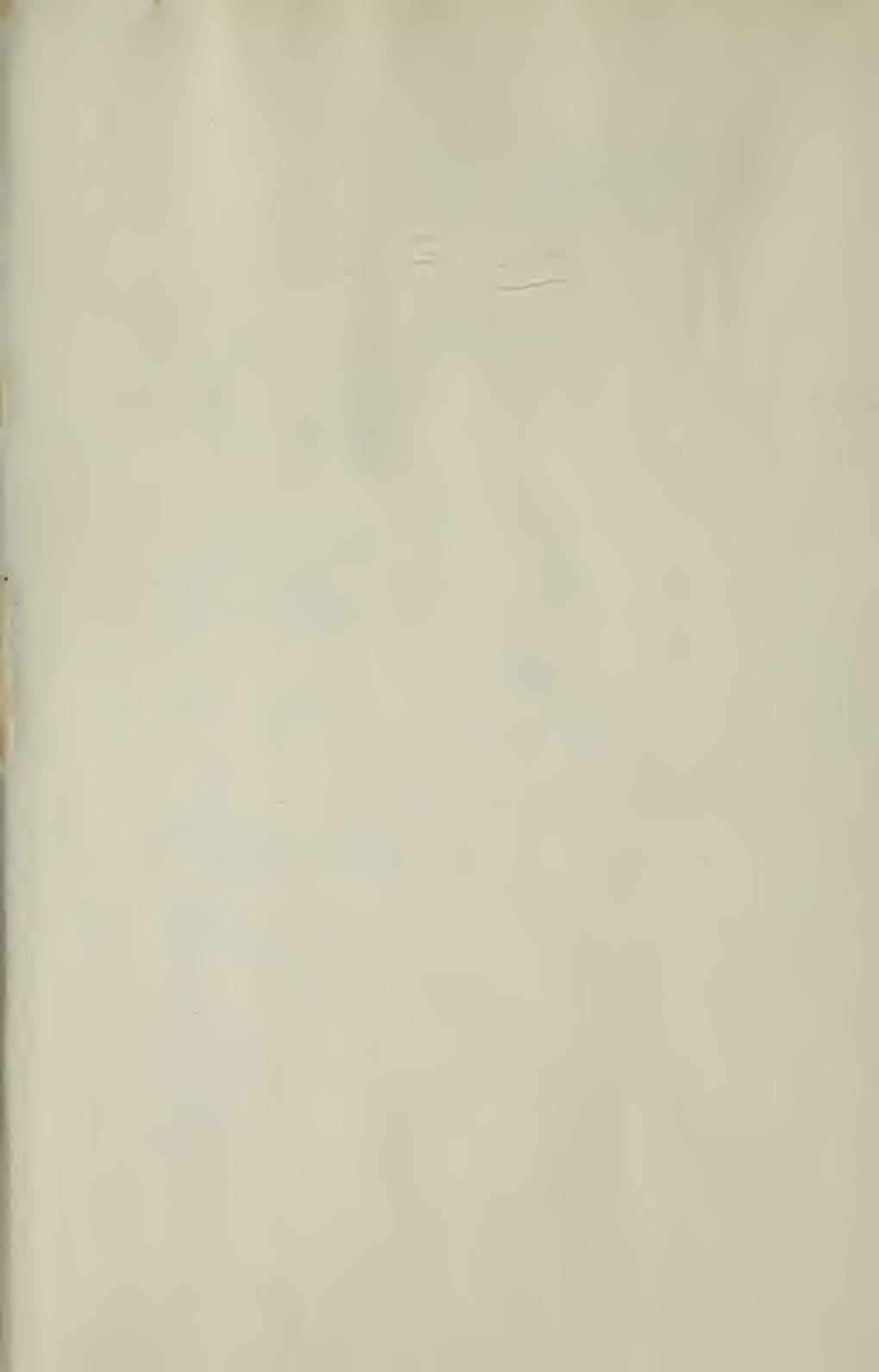
mother, adding that he will remain to punish the traitors ; but, when Fides inquires how this is to be done, he oracularly replies that they shall fall with him, and goes away.

The last scene is played in the banquet hall, where the coronation feast is at its height. The Anabaptists loudly chant the praises of their prophet, who meantime secretly directs two officers to close the doors as soon as their foes have entered. He also bids them effect their escape, saying that beneath the hall a mine has been laid, which is to explode at a given moment, killing all present.

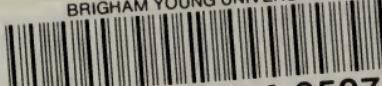
The officers gone, John hospitably invites his guests to drink, pledging them again and again in the most convivial fashion, to their great and noisy satisfaction. Then, all the dignitaries having entered, the three Anabaptist leaders suddenly begin to vociferate “death to the tyrant-king !” This is the signal, but when the leaders approach the prophet, claiming him as their prisoner, he coolly informs them that *they* are all in his power. As he finishes speaking, a first explosion takes place, and flames arise ; then he denounces each leader in turn, declaring that he dies with the Anabaptists in punishment for having consented to be their tool.

The flames are already high, when Fides

comes rushing through the ruins, determined to reach her son, who clasps her passionately in his arms, imploring her forgiveness. This, she generously grants, vowing she will die with him, and both are rapturously welcoming the prospect of speedy death, and life in a happier world, when the curtain falls.



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